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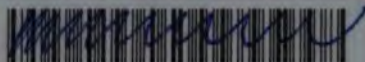
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LITTLE MASTERPIECES OF
ENGLISH POETRY

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W. Woodworth

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W. Woodcock

**LITTLE MASTERPIECES
OF ENGLISH POETRY**

BY BRITISH AND AMERICAN AUTHORS

**EDITED BY
HENRY VAN DYKE**

**ASSISTED BY
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PRINCETON**

**VOLUME VI
ELEGIES AND HYMNS**

**NEW YORK
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	3
Elegies and Poems on Death	
Death the Leveller <i>Shirley</i>	9
Friends Departed <i>Vaughan</i>	10
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard <i>Gray</i>	12
Thanatopsis <i>Bryant</i>	18
Sleep <i>Browning, E. B.</i>	21
The Deserted House <i>Tennyson</i>	23
Proem to— <i>In Memoriam</i> <i>Tennyson</i>	24
The Battle-Field <i>Bryant</i>	26
The Bivouac of the Dead <i>O'Hara</i>	28
The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna <i>Wolfe</i>	31
Coronach <i>Scott</i>	33
Ode Written in 1745 <i>Collins</i>	34
Magnolia Cemetery <i>Timrod</i>	34
A Lyke-Wake Dirge	35
Fear no More the Heat o' the Sun <i>Shakespeare</i>	37
A Sea Dirge <i>Shakespeare</i>	38
The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi <i>Webster</i>	38
A Dirge <i>Webster</i>	39
Minstrel's Song <i>Chatterton</i>	40
Lacrimæ <i>Herrick</i>	41
Wolfram's Dirge <i>Beddoes</i>	42
The Last Word <i>Arnold</i>	43
An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, W. Shakespeare <i>Milton</i>	

Contents

	PAGE
Elegy on Shakespeare <i>Basse</i>	45
On the Tombs in Westminster <i>Beaumont</i>	45
Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke <i>Jonson</i>	46
On Elizabeth L. H. <i>Jonson</i>	47
Upon the Death of Sir Albert Morton's Wife <i>Wotton</i>	47
Epitaph on the Lady Mary Villiers <i>Carew</i>	48
A Nameless Epitaph <i>Arnold</i>	48
On Sir Philip Sidney <i>Greville</i>	49
Lycidas <i>Milton</i>	52
On the Death of Thomson <i>Collins</i>	59
Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson <i>Burns</i>	61
Thoughts <i>Wordsworth</i>	65
Burns <i>Halleck</i>	67
The Old Familiar Faces <i>Lamb</i>	73
Hester <i>Lamb</i>	75
To the Sister of Elia <i>Landor</i>	76
Memorial Verses <i>Arnold</i>	77
On the Death of Mr. William Hervey <i>Cowley</i>	80
Thyrsis <i>Arnold</i>	86
Rugby Chapel <i>Arnold</i>	97
Joseph Rodman Drake <i>Halleck</i>	104
O Captain! My Captain! <i>Whitman</i>	105
Abraham Lincoln <i>Taylor</i>	107
Charles Sumner <i>Longfellow</i>	111
Dirge in Cymbeline <i>Collins</i>	112
Oh! Snatch'd Away in Beauty's Bloom <i>Byron</i>	113
Lucy <i>Wordsworth</i>	114
Rose Aylmer <i>Landor</i>	119
The Maid's Lament <i>Landor</i>	119
Requiescat <i>Arnold</i>	120
Evelyn Hope <i>Browning</i>	121
May and Death <i>Browning</i>	123
The Bridge of Sighs <i>Hood</i>	124

Contents

	PAGE
Lament of the Irish Emigrant	<i>Lady Dufferin</i> . . . 128
The Death Bed	<i>Hood</i> 131
Resignation	<i>Longfellow</i> . . . 131
She Came and Went	<i>Lowell</i> 134
The First Snow-Fall	<i>Lowell</i> 135
A Death-Bed	<i>Aldrich</i> 136
My Sister's Sleep	<i>Rossetti</i> 137
The Mother's Dream	<i>Barnes</i> 139
The Toys	<i>Patmore</i> 140
Requiem	<i>Stevenson</i> 142
In Harbor	<i>Hayne</i> 142
Epilogue	<i>Browning</i> 143
Prospect	<i>Browning</i> 145
Hymns and Poems of Faith	
A Child my Choice	<i>Southwell</i> 149
The Elixir	<i>Herbert</i> 150
Discipline	<i>Herbert</i> 151
Easter	<i>Herbert</i> 152
The Pulley	<i>Herbert</i> 153
Virtue	<i>Herbert</i> 154
Love Triumphant	<i>Quarles</i> 155
The Will	<i>Donne</i> 156
Litany to the Holy Spirit	<i>Herrick</i> 158
Peace	<i>Vaughan</i> 160
The Retreat	<i>Vaughan</i> 161
Bermudas	<i>Marvell</i> 162
The Invitation	<i>Anonymous</i> 163
A Hymn of Trust	<i>Baxter</i> 164
The Voice of the Heavens	<i>Addison</i> 165
The Universal Prayer	<i>Pope</i> 166
The Dying Christian to His Soul	<i>Pope</i> 169
The Quiet Heart	<i>Newton</i> 170
Refuge	<i>Wesley</i> 170
The Golden Door	<i>Blake</i> 172
Morning	<i>Keble</i> 173
Evening	<i>Keble</i> 175
A Christmas Hymn	<i>Domett</i> 178
Abide With Me	<i>Lyte</i> 180

Contents

The Will of God	<i>Faber</i>	P
God's Way	<i>Bonar</i>	
Sensitiveness	<i>Newman</i>	
Flowers Without Fruit . .	<i>Newman</i>	
"O May I Join the Choir In- visible!"	<i>Eliot</i>	
A Life Hid with Christ . .	<i>Shairp</i>	
Constancy	<i>Shairp</i>	
My Psalm	<i>Whittier</i>	
Paradisi Gloria	<i>Parsons</i>	
The Eternal Goodness . .	<i>Whittier</i>	

ELEGIES AND HYMNS



INTRODUCTION

THE poetry of love and mortal grief that has blossomed from the human heart under the shadow of death, and the poetry of trust and immortal hope that has unfolded in the light of religion,—these are flowers of the spirit whose pure and tender colours blend in a natural harmony. I have bound them together in this volume with the title *Elegies and Hymns*.

Elegy is a word which the Greeks and Romans used in a twofold sense: first, to describe any kind of mournful song or lament, even the wordless melody of the nightingale or the halcyon; and second, to denote a poem written in a certain metre, the so-called "elegiac verse" which consisted of alternate dactylic hexameters and pentameters, a smooth, restrained, pensive movement. In English poetry the latter sense is not often used, as the metre is one which it is difficult to imitate in our language, and there are but few examples of it. The former sense, in which the word is broadly applied to various forms of melancholy and regretful poetry, is familiar to critics. Coleridge attempted to make it broader still, defining elegy as "the form of poetry natural to the reflective mind." He asserts that "it may treat

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

of any subject, but it must treat of no subject for itself, but always and exclusively with reference to the poet himself."

In the usage of the people, however, the word has taken a different course. It does not include the poetry of regret for fugitive pleasure or unrequited love, nor all the forms of verse in which the poet, to follow Coleridge's phrase, treats of his subject always and exclusively with reference to himself. These are classed with the pure lyrics, or with reflective verse. But an elegy, in common parlance, has come to mean a poem dealing with the thought or the fact of death. It is not an outward, metrical shape: it is an inward, spiritual form. It is the poetic utterance of the heart of man when he faces the sorrow of mortality. It is the voice in which he answers death and calls after the departed. It is the music with which he at once expresses and soothes the grief of the last farewell, pays tribute to vanished goodness and the memory of noble names, and encourages his own spirit to meet the end that comes to all, with fortitude and an equal mind.

It is in this sense that I have interpreted the sphere of elegiac poetry in this volume, bringing together the best of the shorter poems, of various types, in which the thought of death is central and controlling, and grouping them in six divisions, according to the different notes which they strike. First come the poems in which the *subject of man's mortality* is more broadly treated,

Introduction

as the unexempt condition of his earthly life. Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," Bryant's "Thanatopsis," and the poem of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" are examples. Then come some verses on the death of soldiers and heroes, and after that a little group of lyrical dirges and laments. These are followed by a few famous epitaphs, and these again by the fuller elegies, dedicated for the most part to the memory of the great and good. Here we find "Lycidas," "Thyrsis," "Rugby Chapel," Wordsworth's "Thoughts" after visiting the grave of Burns, and other very noble poems. The last group includes that kind of poetry in which death seems to have a more intimate and personal relation, and the poet's song is made very tender by pity and love. In this group are Wordsworth's verses to the memory of "Lucy," Landor's "Rose Aylmer," Longfellow's "Resignation," Lowell's "The First Snowfall," and the like. The group closes with the brave note of Browning's "Prospice."

The second part of the volume passes from the thought of death to those beliefs and hopes and aspirations by which the heart of man is sustained to endure it, and strengthened to triumph over it. Not all of the poems here are in the form of hymns, but they are all hymn-like. Certainly not all, nor half, of the familiar and well-loved hymns of the Church are included: but the ones that are chosen, while not superior to the others in devotional spirit, are better in form and

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

finer in poetic quality. They have some of the elements of imaginative vision, lucid diction, musical expression, without which a poem cannot be, in any sense, a masterpiece. No collection of poetry would be complete, as a reflection of human life, which did not find a place for at least a few of these lofty and tranquil verses which breathe man's longing and his love toward the Highest, the Holiest, the Eternal.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

ELEGIES AND POEMS ON DEATH

DEATH THE LEVELLER

From The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses.

THE glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against Fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crookèd scythe and spade. 8

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill:
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death. 16

The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds.
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb:
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust. 24

1659.

James Shirley.

FRIENDS DEPARTED

THEY are all gone into the world of light!
And I alone sit ling'ring here;
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear. 4

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest
After the sun's remove. 8

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days:
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmering and decays. 12

O holy Hope! and high Humility,
High as the heavens above!
These are your walks, and you have show'd
them me,
To kindle my cold love. 16

Dear, beauteous Death! the jewel of the Just,
Shining nowhere, but in the dark;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark! 20

Friends Departed

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest
 may know,
 At first sight, if the bird be flown;
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
 That is to him unknown. 24

And yet as Angels in some brighter dreams
 Call to the soul, when man doth sleep:
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted
 themes,
 And into glory peep. 28

If a star were confined into a tomb,
 Her captive flames must needs burn there;
But when the hand that lock'd her up gives
 room,
 She'll shine through all the sphere. 32

O Father of eternal life, and all
 Created glories under Thee!
Resume Thy spirit from this world of thrall
 Into true liberty. 36

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
 My perspective still as they pass:
Or else remove me hence unto that hill,
 Where I shall need no glass. 40

1655.

Henry Vaughan.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me. 4

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the
sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds; 8

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign. 12

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's
shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring
heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep. 16

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share. 24

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke! 28

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor. 32

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave. 36

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted
vault

The pealing anthem swells the note of
praise. 40

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of
Death? 44

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have
sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre. 48

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul. 52

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air. 56

Some village Hampden that with dauntless
breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's
blood. 60

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,—⁶⁴

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes
confined;
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind. ⁶⁸

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame. ⁷²

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool, sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way. ⁷⁶

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture
deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. ⁸⁰

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd
Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die. ⁸⁴

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind? 88

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires. 92

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—96

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by. 104

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless
love. 108

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he: 112

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw
him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the
lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged
thorn:" 116

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own. 120*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send;
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('t was all he wish'd)
a friend. 124*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God. 128*

1751.

Thomas Gray.

THANATOPSIS

To him who, in the love of Nature, holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language: for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty; and she glides
Into his darker musings with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight—
Over thy spirit, and sad images 10
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart—
Go forth under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice:—Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears, 20
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall
claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again;
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up

Thanatopsis

Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock,
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy
mould. 30

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone,—nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world,—with kings,
The powerful of the earth,—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,
Rock-ribbed, and ancient as the sun ; the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between ;
The venerable woods ; rivers that move 40
In majesty, and the complaining brooks,
That make the meadows green ; and, poured
round all,

Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man ! The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. Take the wings 50
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
Save his own dashings,—yet the dead are there!

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And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep,—the dead reign there alone!
So shalt thou rest; and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe 60
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one, as before, will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall
come

And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glide away, the sons of men—
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
And the sweet babe, and the gray-headed man— 70
Shall, one by one, be gathered to thy side
By those who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall
take

His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and
soothed

By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch 80
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

1817.

William Cullen Bryant.

SLEEP

"He giveth his beloved sleep."—*Psalm cxxvi, 2.*

OF all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this,—
"He giveth his beloved—sleep"? 6

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart, to be unmoved,—
The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep,—
The patriot's voice, to teach and rouse,—
The monarch's crown, to light the brows?
"He giveth *his* beloved—sleep." 12

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith, all undisproved,—
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories, to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake,
"He giveth *his* beloved—sleep." 18

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,
But have no tune to charm away

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Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
“He giveth *his* beloved—sleep.” 24

O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delvèd gold the wailers heap!
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God strikes a silence through you all,
And “giveth his beloved—sleep.” 30

Ay, men may wonder while they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man
Confirmed in such a rest to keep;
But angels say, and through the word
I think their happy smile is *heard*—
“He giveth his beloved—sleep.” 36

His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap;
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
“He giveth his beloved—sleep.” 42

For me, my heart, that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the mummers leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would childlike on his love repose
Who “giveth his beloved—sleep.” 48

The Deserted House

And friends, dear friends, when it shall be
That his low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say "Not a tear must o'er her fall!
He giveth his beloved sleep." 54

1838.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

THE DESERTED HOUSE

LIFE and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide:
Careless tenants they! 4

All within is dark as night;
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before. 8

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark, deserted house. 12

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground. 16

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have staid with us! 22
1830. *Lord Tennyson.*

PROEM TO—*IN MEMORIAM*

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove; 4

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made. 8

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just. 12

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine. 16

Proem to—*In Memoriam*

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they. 20

We have but faith : we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we see ;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow. 24

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before, 28

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
We mock thee when we do not fear :
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light. 32

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;
What seem'd my worth since I began ;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee. 36

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved. 40

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth ;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise. 44

1849.

Lord Tennyson.

THE BATTLE-FIELD

ONCE this soft turf, this rivulet's sands,
Were trampled by a hurrying crowd,
And fiery hearts and armèd hands
Encountered in the battle-cloud. 4

Ah ! never shall the land forget
How gushed the life-blood of her brave,—
Gushed, warm with hope and courage yet,
Upon the soil they fought to save. 8

Now all is calm and fresh and still ;
Alone the chirp of flitting bird,
And talk of children on the hill,
And bell of wandering kine, are heard. 12

No solemn host goes trailing by
The black-mouthed gun and staggering
wain ;
Men start not at the battle-cry,—
Oh, be it never heard again ! 16

The Battle-Field

Soon rested those who fought; but thou
Who minglest in the harder strife
For truths which men receive not now,
Thy warfare only ends with life. 20

A friendless warfare! lingering long
Through weary day and weary year;
A wild and many-weaponed throng
Hang on thy front and flank and rear. 24

Yet nerve thy spirit to the proof,
And blench not at thy chosen lot;
The timid good may stand aloof,
The sage may frown,—yet faint thou not. 28

Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,
The foul and hissing bolt of scorn;
For with thy side shall dwell, at last,
The victory of endurance born. 32

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again,—
Th' eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers. 36

Yea, though thou lie upon the dust,
When they who helped thee flee in fear,
Die full of hope and manly trust,
Like those who fell in battle here! 40

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Another hand thy sword shall wield,
Another hand the standard wave,
Till from the trumpet's mouth is pealed
The blast of triumph o'er thy grave. 44

1837.

William Cullen Bryant.

THE BIVOUAC OF THE DEAD

THE muffled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;
No more on Life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.
On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead. 8

No rumor of the foe's advance
Now swells upon the wind;
No troubled thought at midnight haunts
Of loved ones left behind;
No vision of the morrow's strife
The warrior's dream alarms;
No braying horn nor screaming fife
At dawn shall call to arms. 16

Their shivered swords are red with rust,
Their plumèd heads are bowed;
Their haughty banner, trailed in dust,
Is now now their martial shroud.

The Bivouac of the Dead

And plenteous funeral tears have washed
The red stains from each brow,
And the proud forms, by battle gashed,
Are free from Anguish now. 24

The neighing troop, the flashing blade,
The bugle's stirring blast,
The charge, the dreadful cannonade,
The din and shout, are past ;
Nor war's wild note nor glory's peal
Shall thrill with fierce delight
Those breasts that never more may feel
The rapture of the fight. 32

Like the fierce northern hurricane
That sweeps his great plateau,
Flushed with the triumph yet to gain,
Came down the serried foe.
Who heard the thunder of the fray
Break o'er the field beneath,
Knew well the watchword of that day
Was " Victory or Death." 40

Long had the doubtful conflict raged
O'er all that stricken plain,
For never fiercer fight had waged
The vengeful blood of Spain ;
And still the storm of battle blew,
Still swelled the gory tide ;
Not long, our stout old chieftain knew,
Such odds his strength could bide. 48

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

'T was in that hour his stern command
Called to a martyr's grave
The flower of his beloved land,
The nation's flag to save.
By rivers of their fathers' gore
His first-born laurels grew,
And well he deemed the sons would pour
Their lives for glory too. 56

Full many a norther's breath has swept
O'er Angostura's plain,
And long the pitying sky has wept
Above its mouldered slain.
The raven's scream, or eagle's flight,
Or shepherd's pensive lay,
Alone awakes each sullen height
That frowned o'er that dread fray. 64

Sons of the Dark and Bloody Ground,
Ye must not slumber there,
Where stranger steps and tongues resound
Along the heedless air.
Your own proud land's heroic soil
Shall be your fitter grave:
She claims from war his richest spoil—
The ashes of her brave. 72

Thus 'neath their parent turf they rest,
Far from the gory field,
Borne to a Spartan mother's breast
On many a bloody shield;

The Burial of Sir John Moore

The sunshine of their native sky
Smiles sadly on them here,
And kindred eyes and hearts watch by
The heroes' sepulchre. 80

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!
Dear as the blood ye gave;
No impious footstep here shall tread
The herbage of your grave;
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While Fame her record keeps,
Or Honor points the hallowed spot
Where Valor proudly sleeps. 88

Yon marble minstrel's voiceless stone
In deathless song shall tell,
When many a vanished age hath flown,
The story how ye fell;
Nor wreck, nor change, nor winter's blight,
Nor Time's remorseless doom,
Shall dim one ray of glory's light
That gilds your deathless tomb. 96

1847.

Theodore O'Hara.

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AFTER CORUNNA

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried. 4

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light
And the lanthorn dimly burning. 8

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
With his martial cloak around him. 12

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was
dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow. 16

We thought as we hollow'd his narrow bed,
And smooth'd down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er
his head,
And we far away on the billow! 20

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him. 24

But half of our heavy task was done
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing. 28

Coronach

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory ;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory. 32

1817.

Charles Wolfe.

CORONACH

From The Lady of the Lake

HE is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The fount, reappearing,
From the raindrops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow ! 8

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are serest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest. 16

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber !

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone; and for ever! 24

1810.

Sir Walter Scott.

ODE WRITTEN IN 1745

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod. 6

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there! 12

1746.

William Collins.

MAGNOLIA CEMETERY

Sung at Charleston, S. C., over the
graves of the Confed-
erate Soldiers

SLEEP sweetly in your humble graves,
Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause!
Though yet no marble column craves
The pilgrim here to pause. 4

A Lyke-Wake Dirge

In seeds of laurel in the earth
The blossom of your fame is blown,
And somewhere, waiting for its birth,
The shaft is in the stone! 8

Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years
Which keep in trust your storied tombs,
Behold! your sisters bring their tears,
And these memorial blooms. 12

Small tributes! but your shades will smile
More proudly on these wreaths to-day,
Than when some cannon-moulded pile
Shall overlook this bay. 16

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!
There is no holier spot of ground
Than where defeated valor lies,
By mourning beauty crowned! 20

1867.

Henry Timrod.

A LYKE-WAKE DIRGE

THIS ae nighte, this ae nighte,
—Every nighte and alle,
Fire and steel and candle-lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule. 4

Wha thou from hence away art past,
—Every nighte and alle,
Thou Whinny-muir thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule. 8

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
—Every nighte and alle,
Sit thee down and put them on;
And Christe receive thy saule. 12

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gav'st nane,
—Every nighte and alle,
The whinnes sall prick thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thy saule. 16

From Whinny-muir when thou may'st pass,
—Every nighte and alle,
To Brig o' Dread thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule. 20

From Brig o' Dread when thou may'st pass,
—Every nighte and alle,
To Purgatory fire thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule. 24

If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
—Every nighte and alle,
The fire sall never make thee shrink;
And Christe receive thy saule. 28

If meat or drink thou ne'er gav'st nane,
—Every nighte and alle,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thy saule. 32

“Fear No More the Heat o’ the Sun”

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
—Every nighte and alle,
Fire and sleet and candle-lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule. 36
Scott, Minst. Scot. Bord.

“FEAR NO MORE THE HEAT O’
THE SUN”

From Cymbeline

FEAR no more the heat o’ the sun,
Nor the furious winter’s rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta’en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust. 6

Fear no more the frown o’ the great,
Thou are past the tyrant’s stroke;
Care no more to clothe, and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust. 12

Fear no more the lightning-flash
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust. 18

1623.

William Shakespeare.

A SEA DIRGE

From The Tempest

FULL fathom five thy father lies :
Of his bones are coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes :
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell :
Hark ! now I hear them,—Ding-dong,
bell !

1623.

William Shakespeare.

THE SHROUDING OF THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

From The Duchess of Malfi

HARK ! Now everything is still,
The screech-owl and the whistler shrill,
Call upon our dame aloud,
And bid her quickly don her shroud !

4

A Dirge

Much you had of land and rent;
Your length in clay's now competent:
A long war disturb'd your mind;
Here your perfect peace is sign'd. 8

Of what is 't fools make such vain keeping?
Sin their conception, their birth weeping,
Their life a general mist of error,
Their death a hideous storm of terror.
Strew your hair with powders sweet,
Don clean linen, bathe your feet, 14

And—the foul end more to check—
A crucifix let bless your neck:
'T is now full tide 'tween night and day;
End your groan and come away. 18

1612? 1623.

John Webster.

A DIRGE

From The White Devil.

CALL for the robin-redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er the shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.
Call unto his funeral dole
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
And (when gay tombs are robb'd) sustain no
 harm;
But keep the wolf far thence, that 's foe to men,
For with his nails he 'll dig them up again. 10
1612. John Webster.

MINSTREL'S SONG

From *Ælla*

Oh sing unto my roundelay!
 Oh drop the briny tear with me!
Dance no more at holiday;
 Like a running river be.
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed,
 All under the willow-tree. 7

Black his hair as the winter night,
 White his skin as the summer snow,
Ruddy his face as the morning light;
 Cold he lies in the grave below. 11

Sweet his tongue as the throstle's note;
 Quick in dance as thought can be;
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout;
 Oh! he lies by the willow-tree! 15

Hark! the raven flaps his wing
 In the briered dell below;
Hark! the death-owl loud doth sing
 To the nightmares as they go. 19

Lacrimæ

See! the white moon shines on high;
Whiter is my true-love's shroud,
Whiter than the morning sky,
Whiter than the evening cloud. 23

Here, upon my true-love's grave
Shall the barren flowers be laid,
Not one holy saint to save
All the coldness of a maid. 27

With my hands I 'll fix the briers
Round his holy corse to gre;
Elfin fairies, light your fires;
Here my body still shall be. 31

Come, with acorn-cup and thorn,
Drain my heart's blood away;
Life and all its good I scorn,
Dance by night, or feast by day. 35

Water-witches, crowned with reytes,
Bear me to your lethal tide.
I die! I come! my true-love waits.
Thus the damsel spake, and died. 39

1769. 1777.

Thomas Chatterton.

LACRIMÆ

CALL me no more,
As heretofore,
The music of a feast;
Since now, alas!
The mirth that was
In me, is dead or ceas'd. 6

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Before I went
To banishment
Into the loathed west,
I could rehearse
A lyric verse,
And speak it with the best. 12

But time, ah me!
Has laid, I see,
My organ fast asleep;
And turn'd my voice
Into the noise
Of those that sit and weep. 18

1648.

Robert Herrick.

WOLFRAM'S DIRGE

From Death's Jest-Book

If thou wilt ease thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then sleep, dear, sleep!
And not a sorrow
Hang any tear on your eyelashes;
Lie still and deep,
Sad soul, until the sea-wave washes
The rim o' the sun to-morrow,
In eastern sky. 9

But wilt thou cure thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then die, dear, die!

The Last Word

'T is deeper, sweeter,
Than on a rose bank to lie dreaming
With folded eye;
And then alone, amid the beaming
Of love's stars, thou 'lt meet her
In eastern sky. 18

1850.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes.

THE LAST WORD

CREEP into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said!
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last. 4

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired; best be still. 8

They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee?
Better men fared thus before thee;
Fired their ringing shot and pass'd,
Hotly charged—and sank at last. 12

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall! 16

1867.

Matthew Arnold.

AN EPITAPH ON THE ADMIRABLE
DRAMATIC POET, W.
SHAKESPEARE

WHAT needs my Shakespeare for his honoured
bones,

The labour of an age in pilèd stones?

Or that his hallowed relics should be hid

Under a star-y-pointing pyramid?

Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,

What need'st thou such weak witness of thy
name?

Thou in our wonder and astonishment

Hast built thyself a livelong monument.

For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring
art,

Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart 10

Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book

Those Delphic lines with deep impression took;

Then thou our fancy of itself bereaving,

Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;

And so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie,

That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

1632.

John Milton.

ELEGY ON SHAKESPEARE

RENOWNED Spenser lie a thought more nigh
To learnèd Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie
A little nearer Spenser, to make room
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold
tomb.

To lodge all four in one bed make a shift
Until Doomsday, for hardly will a fift
Betwixt this day and that by Fate be slain,
For whom your curtains may be drawn again.
If your precedency in death doth bar
A fourth place in your sacred sepulchre, 10
Under this carved marble of thine own,
Sleep, rare Tragedian, Shakespeare, sleep alone:
Thy unmolested peace, unshared cave
Possess as lord, not tenant, of thy grave,
That unto us and others it may be
Honour hereafter to be laid by thee.

1633.

William Basse.

ON THE TOMBS IN WESTMINSTER

MORTALITY, behold and fear!
What a change of flesh is here!
Think how many royal bones
Sleep within these heaps of stones;

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Here they lie had realms and lands,
Who now want strength to stir their hands,
Where from their pulpits seal'd with dust
They preach, "In greatness is no trust."
Here 's an acre sown indeed
With the richest, royallest seed 10
That the earth did e'er suck in
Since the first man died for sin:
Here the bones of birth have cried
"Though gods they were, as men they died!"
Here are sands, ignoble things,
Dropt from the ruin'd sides of kings:
Here 's a world of pomp and state
Buried in dust, once dead by fate.
1653. *Francis Beaumont.*

EPITAPH ON THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE

UNDERNEATH this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Learn'd and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee. 6

Marble piles let no man raise
To her name, for after days;

The Death of Sir Albert Morton's Wife

Some kind woman, born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe,
Shall turn statue, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb. 12

1641.

Ben. Jonson.

ON ELIZABETH L. H.

WOULDEST thou hear what Man can say
In a little? Reader, stay.
Underneath this stone doth lie
As much Beauty as could die:
Which in life did harbour give
To more Virtue than doth live.
If at all she had a fault,
Leave it buried in this vault.
One name was *Elizabeth*,
The other, let it sleep with death: 10
Fitter, where it died, to tell,
Than that it lived at all. Farewell!

1616.

Ben. Jonson.

UPON THE DEATH OF SIR ALBERT MORTON'S WIFE

HE first deceased; she for a little tried
To live without him, liked it not, and died.
1627. *Sir Henry Wotton.*

EPITAPH

On the Lady Mary Villiers

THE Lady Mary Villiers lies
Under this stone; with weeping eyes
The parents that first gave her birth,
And their sad friends, laid her in earth.
If any of them, Reader, were
Known unto thee, shed a tear;
Or if thyself possess a gem,
As dear to thee, as this to them;
Though a stranger to this place,
Bewail in theirs thine own hard case: 10
For thou perhaps at thy return
May'st find thy Darling in an urn.

1640.

Thomas Carew.

A NAMELESS EPITAPH

ASK not my name, O friend!
That Being only, which hath known each man
From the beginning, can
Remember each unto the end.

1867.

Matthew Arnold.

ON SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

SILENCE augmenteth grief, writing increaseth
 rage,
 Stal'd are my thoughts, which loved and lost,
 the wonder of our age,
 Yet quickened now with fire, though dead with
 frost ere now,
 Enraged I write I know not what: dead quick,
 I know not how. 4

Hard-hearted minds relent, and Rigor's tears
 abound,
 And Envy strangely rues his end, in whom no
 fault she found;
 Knowledge his light hath lost, Valor hath slain
 her knight:
 Sidney is dead, dead is my friend, dead is the
 world's delight. 8

Place pensive wailes his fall, whose presence
 was her pride,
 Time crieth out, my ebb is come, his life was
 my spring-tide;

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Fame mourns in that she lost, the ground of her
reports,
Each living wight laments his lack, and all in
sundry sorts. 12

He was—woe worth that word—to each well
thinking mind,
A spotless friend, a matchless man, whose
virtue ever shined,
Declaring in his thoughts, his life, and that he
writ,
Highest conceits, longest foresights, and deepest
works of wit. 16

He only like himself, was second unto none,
Where death—though life—we rue, and wrong,
and all in vain do moan,
Their loss, not him wail they, that fill the world
with cries,
Death slew not him, but he made death his
ladder to the skies. 20

Now sink of sorrow I, who live, the more the
wrong,
Who wishing Death, whom death denies, whose
thread is all too long,
Who tied to wretched life, who look for no relief,
Must spend my ever-dying days in never-ending
grief. 24

Heart's ease and only I, like parallels run on,
Whose equal length, keep equal breadth, and
never meet in one,

On Sir Philip Sidney

Yet for not wronging him, my thoughts, my
sorrows' cell,
Shall not run out, though leak they will, for
liking him so well. 28

Farewell to you my hopes, my wonted waking
dreams,
Farewell sometime enjoyed joy eclipsed are
thy beams,
Farewell self-pleasing thoughts, which quietness
brings forth,
And farewell friendship's sacred league uniting
minds of worth. 32

And farewell merry heart, the gift of guiltless
minds,
And all sports, which for live's restore, variety
assigns,
Let all that sweet is, void? in me no mirth may
dwell,
Philip the cause of all this woe, my life's content,
farewell. 36

Now rime, the source of rage, which art no kin
to skill,
And endless grief which deads my life, yet knows
not now to kill,
Go seek that hapless tomb, which if ye hap to
find,
Salute the stones, that keep the lines, that held
so good a mind. 40

1593.

Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke.

LYCIDAS

YET once more, O ye Laurels, and once more
Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never-sear,
I com to pluck your Berries harsh and crude,
And with forc'd fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer :
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew 10
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not flote upon his watry bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well,
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destin'd Urn, 20
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nurst upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.
Together both, ere the high Lawns appear'd

Lycidas

Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the Gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the Star that rose, at Ev'ning, bright 30
Toward Heav'ns descent had slop'd his westering
wheel.

Mean while the Rural ditties were not mute,
Temper'd to th'Oaten Flute;
Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with clov'n heel,
From the glad sound would not be absent long,
And old Damocetas lov'd to hear our song.

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee Shepherd, thee the Woods, and desert

Caves,
With wilde Thyme and the gadding Vine
o'regrown, 40
And all their echoes mourn.
The Willows, and the Hazle Copses green,
Shall now no more be seen,
Fanning their joyous Leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the Canker to the Rose,
Or Taint-worm to the weanling Herds that graze,
Or Frost to Flowers, that their gay wardrobe
wear,

When first the White thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to Shepherds ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless
deep 50

Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Where your old Bards, the famous Druids lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream:
Ay me, I fondly dream!

Had ye bin there—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse her self that Orpheus bore,
The Muse her self, for her enchanting son
Whom Universal nature did lament, 60

When by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! What boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely slighted Shepherds trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse,
Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Næra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth
raise 70

(That last infirmity of Noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious dayes;
But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with th'abhorred shears,
And slits the thin spun life. But not the praise,
Phœbus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears;
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistening foil
Set off to th'world, nor in broad rumour lies, 80
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfet witness of all judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,

Lycidas

Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd
flood,

Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal
reeds,

That strain I heard was of a higher mood:

But now my Oat proceeds,

And listens to the Herald of the Sea

That came in Neptune's plea, 90

He ask'd the Waves, and ask'd the Fellon winds,

What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle
swain?

And question'd every gust of rugged wings

That blows from off each beak'd Promontory,

They knew not of his story,

And sage Hippotades their answer brings,

That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd,

The Ayr was calm, and on the level brine,

Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.

It was that fatal and perfidious Bark 100

Built in th'eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,

That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend Sire, went footing slow,

His Mantle hairy, and his Bonnet sedge,

Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge

Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.

Ah! Who hath reft (quoth he) my dearest

pledge?

Last came, and last did go,

The Pilot of the Galilean lake,

Two massy Keys he bore of metals twain, 110

(The Golden opes, the Iron shuts amain)

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

He shook his Miter'd locks, and stern bespake,
How well could I have spar'd for thee, young
swain,

Anow of such as for their bellies sake,
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold?
Of other care they little reck'ning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearers feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know
how to hold

A Sheep-hook, or have learn'd ought else the
least 120

That to the faithful Herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They
are sped;

And when they list, their lean and flashly songs
Grate on their scrannel Pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they
draw,

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the grim Woolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing sed,
But that two-handed engine at the door 130
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

Return Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
That shrunk thy streams; return Sicilian Muse,
And call the Vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells, and flowrets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low where the mild whispers use,
Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing
brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart Star sparely looks,

Lycidas

Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,
That on the green terf suck the honied
 showers, 140
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe Primrose that forsaken dies.
The tufted Crow-toe, and pale Jessamine,
The white Pink, and the Pansy freakt with jet,
The glowing Violet.
The Musk-rose, and the well attir'd Woodbine.
With Cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And Daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
To strew the Laureat Hearse where Lycid lies.
For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding
 Seas
Wash far away, where ere thy bones are hurl'd,
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou to our moist vows deni'd,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old, 160
Where the great vision of the guarded Mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;
Look homeward Angel now, and melt with
 ruth.
And, O ye Dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woful Shepherds weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the wat'ry floor,
So sinks the day-star in the Ocean bed,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled
Ore, 170

Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of him that walk'd the
waves

Where other groves, and other streams along,
With Nectar pure his oozy Locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial Song,
In the blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet Societies
That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the Shepherds weep no more;
Hence forth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth Swain to th' oaks and
rills,

While the still morn went out with Sandals gray,
He touch'd the tender stops of various Quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the Sun had stretch'd out all the
hills, 190

And now was dropt into the Western bay;
At last he rose, and twitch'd his Mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new.

1638.

John Milton.

ON THE DEATH OF THOMSON

IN yonder grave a Druid lies,
Where slowly winds the stealing wave;
The year's best sweets shall duteous rise
To deck its poet's sylvan grave. 4

In yon deep bed of whispering reeds
His airy harp shall now be laid,
That he, whose heart in sorrow bleeds,
May love through life the soothing shade. 8

Then maids and youths shall linger here,
And while its sounds at distance swell,
Shall sadly seem in Pity's ear
To hear the woodland pilgrim's knell. 12

Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar,
To bid his gentle spirit rest. 16

And oft, as ease and health retire
To breezy lawn, or forest deep,
The friend shall view yon whitening spire,
And 'mid the varied landscape weep. 20

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

But thou, who own'st that earthy bed,
Ah! what will every dirge avail;
Or tears, which love and pity shed,
That mourn beneath the gliding sail? 24

Yet lives there one whose heedless eye
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near?
With him, sweet bard, may fancy die,
And joy desert the blooming year. 28

But thou, lorn stream, whose sullen tide
No sedge-crowned sisters now attend,
Now waft me from the green hill's side
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend! 32

And see—the fairy valleys fade;
Dun night has veiled the solemn view!
Yet once again, dear parted shade,
Meek Nature's child, again adieu! 36

Thy genial meads, assigned to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom;
There hinds and shepherd-girls shall dress
With simple hands thy rural tomb. 40

Long, long, thy stone and pointed clay
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes:
O vales and wild woods! shall he say,
In yonder grave your Druid lies! 44

1749.

William Collins.

ELEGY ON CAPTAIN MATTHEW HENDERSON

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle Devil wi' a woodie
Haur! thee hame to his black smiddie
O'er hurcheon hides,
And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides! 6

He 's gane, he 's gane! he 's frae us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exiled. 12

Ye hills, near neebors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing yearns,
Where echo slumbers!
Come join ye, Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers! 18

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens!
Ye hazelly shaws and briery dens\

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Ye burnies, wimplin' down your glens,
 Wi' toddlin' din,
Or foaming, strang, wi' hasty stens,
 Frae lin to lin! 24

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lea,
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see;
Ye woodbines hanging bonnilie
 In scented bowers;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
 The first o' flowers! 30

At dawn, when every grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at his head,
At even, when beans their fragrance shed,
 I' the rustling gale;
Ye maukins whiddin through the glade,
 Come join my wail. 36

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
Ye curlews calling through a clud;
 Ye whistling plover;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood;
 He 's gane forever! 42

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals;
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
 Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
 Rair for his sake. 48

Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson

Mourn, clamoring craiks, at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flowering clover gay;
And when you wing your annual way
 Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds wha lies in clay,
 Wham we deplore. 54

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bower,
In some auld tree, or eldritch tower,
What time the moon, wi' silent glower,
 Sets up her horn,
Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour
 Till waukrife morn. 60

O rivers, forests, hills and plains!
Oft have ye heard my canty strains:
But now, what else for me remains
 But tales of wo?
And frae my een the drapping rains
 Maun ever flow. 66

Mourn, Spring, thou darling of the year!
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear:
Thou, Simmer, while each corny spear
 Shoots up its head,
Thy gay green flowery tresses shear,
 For him that 's dead! 72

Thou Autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy fallow mantle tear!
Thou, Winter, hurling through the air

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we 've lost. 78

Mourn him, thou sun, great source of light!
Mourn, empress of the silent night!
And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
My Matthew mourn!
For thro' your orbs he 's ta'en his flight,
Ne'er to return. 84

O Henderson, the man! the brother!
And art thou gone, and gone forever?
And hast thou crost that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound?
Like thee where shall I find another,
The world around? 90

Go to your sculptured tombs, ye great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by thy honest turf I 'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep the ae best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth. 96

1793.

Robert Burns.

THOUGHTS

After a visit to the grave of Burns

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—"The Vision" tells us how—
 With holly spray,
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
 And passed away. 6

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister, throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
 In social grief—
Indulged as if it were a wrong
 To seek relief. 12

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
 Of good and fair,
Let us beside this limpid Stream
 Breathe hopeful air. 18

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight;
Think rather of those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

His course was true,
When Wisdom prospered in his sight,
And virtue grew. 24

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his Book in hand,
We wont to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
Of each sweet Lay. 30

How oft inspired must he have trod
These pathways, yon far-stretching road !
There lurks his home ; in that Abode,
With mirth elate,
Or in his nobly-pensive mood,
The Rustic sate. 36

Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature, from what cause,
And by what rules
She trained her Burns to win applause
That shames the Schools. 42

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen ;
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when
Bees fill their hives ;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives. 48

Burns

What need of fields in some far clime
Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime,
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
 From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
 Folds up his wings? 54

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven
This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
 With vain endeavour,
And memory of Earth's bitter leaven,
 Effaced for ever. 60

But why to Him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
 With all that live?—
The best of what we do and are,
 Just God, forgive! 66

1803. 1845.

William Wordsworth.

BURNS

WILD rose of Alloway! my thanks;
Thou 'mind'st me of that autumn noon
When first we met upon "the banks
And braes o' bonny Doon." 4

Like thine, beneath the thorn-tree's bough,
My sunny hour was glad and brief;

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

We 've crossed the winter sea, and thou
Art withered—flower and leaf. 8

And will not thy death-doom be mine—
The doom of all things wrought of clay?
And withered my life's leaf like thine,
Wild rose of Alloway? 12

Not so his memory for whose sake
My bosom bore thee far and long—
His, who a humbler flower could make
Immortal as his song, 16

The memory of Burns—a name
That calls, when brimmed her festal cup,
A nation's glory and her shame,
In silent sadness up. 20

A nation's glory—be the rest
Forgot—she 's canonized his mind,
And it is joy to speak the best
We may of humankind. 24

I 've stood beside the cottage bed
Where the bard-peasant first drew breath;
A straw-thatched roof above his head,
A straw-wrought couch beneath. 28

And I have stood beside the pile,
His monument—that tells to Heaven
The homage of earth's proudest isle
To that bard-peasant given. 32

Burns

Bid thy thoughts hover o'er that spot,
Boy-minstrel, in thy dreaming hour;
And know, however low his lot,
A poet's pride and power; 36

The pride that lifted Burns from earth,
The power that gave a child of song
Ascendency o'er rank and birth,
The rich, the brave, the strong; 40

And if despondency weigh down
Thy spirit's fluttering pinions then,
Despair—thy name is written on
The roll of common men. 44

There have been loftier themes than his,
And longer scrolls, and louder lyres,
And lays lit up with Poesy's
Purer and holier fires: 48

Yet read the names that know not death;
Few nobler ones than Burns are there;
And few have won a greener wreath
Than that which binds his hair. 52

His is that language of the heart
In which the answering heart would speak,
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
Or the smile light the cheek; 56

And his that music to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime. 60

And who has heard his song, nor knelt
Before its spell with willing knee,
And listened and believed, and felt
The poet's mastery. 64

O'er the mind's sea, in calm and storm,
O'er the heart's sunshine and its showers,
O'er Passion's moments, bright and warm,
O'er Reason's dark, cold hours; 68

On fields where brave men "die or do,"
In halls where rings the banquet's mirth,
Where mourners weep, where lovers woo,
From throne to cottage hearth? 72

What sweet tears dim the eye unshed,
What wild vows falter on the tongue,
When "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,"
Or "Auld Lang Syne," is sung! 76

Pure hopes that lift the soul above,
Come with his Cotter's hymn of praise,
And dreams of youth, and truth, and love,
With "Logan's" banks and braes. 80

And when he breathes his master-lay
Of Alloway's witch-haunted wall,
All passions in our frames of clay
Come thronging at his call. 84

Burns

Imagination's world of air,
And our own world, its gloom and glee,
Wit, pathos, poetry, are there,
And death's sublimity. 88

And Burns—though brief the race he ran,
Though rough and dark the path he trod—
Lived, died, in form and soul a man,
The image of his God. 92

Through care, and pain, and want, and woe,
With wounds that only death could heal,
Tortures—the poor alone can know,
The proud alone can feel; 96

He kept his honesty and truth,
His independent tongue and pen,
And moved, in manhood as in youth,
Pride of his fellow-men. 100

Strong sense, deep feeling, passions strong,
A hate of tyrant and of knave,
A love of right, a scorn of wrong,
Of coward and of slave; 104

A kind, true heart, a spirit high,
That could not fear and would not bow,
Were written in his manly eye
And on his manly brow. 108

Praise to the bard! his words are driven,
Like flower-seeds by the far winds sown,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Where'er beneath the sky of heaven,
The birds of fame have flown. 113

Praise to the man! a nation stood
Beside his coffin with wet eyes,
Her brave, her beautiful, her good,
As when a loved one dies. 116

And still, as on his funeral-day,
Men stand his cold earth-couch around,
With the mute homage that we pay
To consecrated ground. 120

And consecrated ground it is,
The last, the hallowed home of one
Who lives upon all memories,
Though with the buried gone. 124

Such graves as his are pilgrim-shrines,
Shrines to no code or creed confined—
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind. 128

Sages, with Wisdom's garland wreathed,
Crowned kings, and mitred priests of power,
And warriors with their bright swords
sheathed,
The mightiest of the hour; 132

And lowlier names, whose humble home
Is lit by Fortune's dimmer star,
Are there—o'er wave and mountain come,
From countries near and far; 136

The Old Familiar Faces

Pilgrims, whose wandering feet have pressed
The Switzer's snow, the Arab's sand,
Or trod the piled leaves of the West,
My own green forest-land. 140

All ask the cottage of his birth,
Gaze on the scenes he loved and sung,
And gather feelings not of earth
His fields and streams among. 144

They linger by the Doon's low trees,
And pastoral Nith, and wooded Ayr,
And round thy sepulchres, Dumfries!
The Poet's tomb is there. 148

But what to them the Sculptor's art,
His funeral columns, wreaths, and urns?
Wear they not graven on the heart
The name of Robert Burns? 152
1822. *Fitz-Greene Halleck.*

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-
days;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces. 3

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom
cronies;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces. 6

I loved a Love once, fairest among women:
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her,—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces. 9

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces. 12

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood;
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces. 15

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces. 18

For some they have died, and some they have
left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces. 21

1798.

Charles Lamb.

HESTER

WHEN maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try
 With vain endeavour. 4

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
 And her together. 8

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
 That flush'd her spirit: 12

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call: if 't was not pride,
It was a joy to that allied,
 She did inherit. 16

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool;
But she was train'd in Nature's school;
 Nature had blest her. 20

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

A waking eye, a prying mind ;
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind ;
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind ;
Ye could not Hester. 24

My sprightly neighbour ! gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning, 28

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet forewarning? 32

1803.

Charles Lamb.

TO THE SISTER OF ELIA

COMFORT thee, O thou mourner, yet awhile !
Again shall Elia's smile
Refresh thy heart, where heart can ache no more.
What is it we deplore? 4

He leaves behind him, freed from griefs and
years,
Far worthier things than tears.
The love of friends without a single foe :
Unequalled lot below ! 8

His gentle soul, his genius, these are thine ;
For these dost thou repine ?

Memorial Verses

He may have left the lowly walks of men;
Left them he has; what then? 12

Are not his footsteps followed by the eyes
Of all the good and wise?
Tho' the warm day is over, yet they seek
Upon the lofty peak 16

Of his pure mind the roseate light that glows
O'er death's perennial snows.
Behold him! from the region of the blest
He speaks: he bids thee rest. 20
1837. *Walter Savage Landor.*

MEMORIAL VERSES

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
But one such death remained to come;
The last poetic voice is dumb—
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bowed our head and held our breath.
He taught us little; but our soul
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
With shivering heart the strife we saw 10
Of passion with eternal law;
And yet with reverential awe
We watched the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titanic strife.

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

When Goethe's death was told, we said:
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the iron age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear; 20
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*
He looked on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
The turmoil of expiring life—
He said: *The end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there!
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below 30
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth!—Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
For never has such soothing voice
Been to your shadowy world conveyed,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye, 40
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen—on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.

Memorial Verses

He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease; 50
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth returned; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furled,
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course 60
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel;
Others will strengthen us to bear—
But who, ah! who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly—
But who, like him, will put it by? 70

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

1850.

Matthew Arnold.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. WILLIAM HERVEY

It was a dismal and a fearful night,
Scarce could the morn drive on the unwilling
light,
When sleep, death's image, left my troubled
breast,
By something liker death possessed.
My eyes with tears did uncommanded flow,
And on my soul hung the dull weight
Of some intolerable fate.
What bell was that? Ah me! too much I
know.

8

My sweet companion, and my gentle peer,
Why hast thou left me thus unkindly here,
Thy end for ever, and my life, to moan?
O, thou hast left me all alone!
Thy soul and body, when Death's agony
Besieged around thy noble heart,
Did not with more reluctance part,
Than I, my dearest friend! do part from thee. 16

My dearest friend, would I had died for thee!
Life and this world henceforth will tedious be.

On the Death of Mr. William Hervey

Nor shall I know hereafter what to do,
If once my griefs prove tedious too.
Silent and sad I walk about all day,
As sullen ghosts stalk speechless by
Where their hid treasures lie;
Alas! my treasure 's gone! why do I stay? 24

He was my friend, the truest friend on earth;
A strong and mighty influence joined our birth;
Nor did we envy the most sounding name
By friendship given of old to fame.
None but his brethren he and sisters knew
Whom the kind youth preferred to me;
And even in that we did agree,
For much above myself I loved them too. 32

Say, for you saw us, ye immortal lights,
How oft unwearied have we spent the nights,
Till the Ledaean stars, so famed for love,
Wondered at us from above!
We spent them not in toys, in lusts, or wine;
But search of deep Philosophy,
Wit, Eloquence, and Poetry,
Arts which I loved, for they, my friend, were
thine. 40

Ye fields of Cambridge, our dear Cambridge,
say
Have ye not seen us walking every day?
Was there a tree about which did not know
The love betwixt us two?

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Henceforth, ye gentle trees for ever fade;
Or your sad branches thicker join,
And into darksome shades combine,
Dark as the grave wherein my friend is laid! 48

Henceforth, no learned youths beneath you sing,
Till all the tuneful birds to your boughs they
bring;
No tuneful birds play with their wonted cheer,
And called the learned youths to hear;
No whistling winds through the glad branches
fly:
But all, with sad solemnity,
Mute and unmoved be,
Mute as the grave wherein my friend does lie. 56

To him my Muse made haste with every strain,
Whilst it was new and warm yet from the brain:
He loved my worthless rhymes, and, like a friend,
Would find out something to commend.
Hence now, my Muse! thou canst not me
delight:
Be this my latest verse,
With which I now adorn his hearse;
And this my grief, without thy help, shall
write. 64

Had I a wreath of bays about my brow,
I should contern that flourishing honour now;
Condemn it to the fire, and joy to hear
It rage and crackle there.

On the Death of Mr. William Hervey

Instead of bays, crown with sad cypress me;
Cypress, which tombs does beautify:
Not Phœbus grieved so much as I,
For him who first was made that mournful
tree. 72

Large was his soul: as large a soul as e'er
Submitted to inform a body here;
High as the place 't was shortly in heaven to
have,
But low and humble as his grave:
So high that all the virtues there did come,
As to their chiefest seat
Conspicuous and great:
So low, that for me too it made a room. 80

He scorned this busy world below, and all
That we, mistaken mortals! pleasure call;
Was filled with innocent gallantry and truth,
Triumphant o'er the sins of youth.
He, like the stars, to which he now is gone,
That shine with beams like flame,
Yet burn not with the same,
Had all the light of youth, of the fire none. 88

Knowledge he only sought, and so soon caught,
As if for him knowledge had rather sought:
Nor did more learning ever crowded lie
In such a short mortality.
Whene'er the skilful youth discoursed or writ,
Still did the notions throng
About his eloquent tongue,
Nor could his ink flow faster than his wit. 96

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

So strong a wit did Nature to him frame,
As all things but his judgment overcame;
His judgment like the heavenly moon did show,
Tempering that mighty sea below.
Oh! had he lived in Learning's world, what
bound
Would have been able to control
His overpowering soul!
We 've lost in him arts that not yet are
found.

104

His mirth was the pure spirits of various wit,
Yet never did his God or friends forget;
And, when deep talk and wisdom came in view,
Retired and gave to them their due:
For the rich help of books he always took,
Though his own searching mind before
Was so with notions written o'er
As if wise Nature had made that her book.

112

So many virtues joined in him, as we
Can scarce pick here and there in history;
More than old writers' practice e'er could reach;
As much as they could ever teach.
These did Religion, Queen of Virtues! sway:
And all their sacred motions steer,
Just like the first and highest sphere,
Which wheels about, and turns all heaven one
way.

120

With as much zeal, devotion, piety,
He always lived, as other saints do die.

On the Death of Mr. William Hervey

Still with his soul severe account he kept,
Weeping all debts out ere he slept:
Then down in peace and innocence he lay,
Like the sun's laborious light,
Which still in water sets at night,
Unsullied with his journey of the day. 128

Wondrous young man! why wert thou made so
good,
To be snatched hence ere better understood?
Snatched before half of thee enough was seen!
Thou ripe, and yet thy life but green!
Nor could thy friends take their last sad
farewell;
But danger and infectious death
Maliciously seized on that breath
Where life, spirit, pleasure, always used to
dwell. 136

But happy thou, ta'en from this frantic age,
Where ignorance and hypocrisy does rage!
A fitter time for heaven no soul ere chose,
The place now only free from those.
There 'mong the blest thou dost for ever shine,
And wheresoe'er thou cast'st thy view,
Upon that white and radiant crew,
Seest not a soul clothed with more light than
thine. 144

And if the glorious saints cease not to know
Their wretched friends who fight with life below,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Thy flame to me does still the same abide,
Only more pure and rarified.
There, whilst immortal hymns thou dost
rehearse,
Thou dost with holy pity see
Our dull and earthly poesy,
Where grief and misery can be joined with
verse. 152

1656. Abraham Cowley.

THYRSIS

A MONODY, to commemorate the author's friend,
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, who died
at Florence, 1861

How changed is here each spot man makes or
fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-
stacks—
Are ye too changed, ye hills?
See, 't is no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway
strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days—
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then. 10

Thyrsis

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth
Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree
crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset
flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful
Thames?—
This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and
briars!
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening. 20

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland
dim.
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields
lived on. 30

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each
stick;

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And with the country-folk acquaintance
made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first
assay'd.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy
heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away. 40

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not
keep,
For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly
sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd
his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy
happy ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead. 50

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day—
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor

Thyrsis

With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet-field, through the vext garden-
trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing
breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom
go I! 60

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and
swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-
smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-
trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-
star. 70

He harkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet
spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smother
reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall
heed—
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd
thee!

80

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute
would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the
dead.

90

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never
heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd;
And we should tease her with our plaint
in vain!

100

Thyrsis

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd
hill!

Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,

I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford,
yields,

And what sedged brooks are Thames's
tributaries; 110

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?—

But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-
blossom'd trees,

Where thick the cowslips grew, and far
descried

High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by

The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the
ploughboy's team,

And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime. 120

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoor'd our skiff when through the
Wytham flats,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet
among
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We track'd the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us
pass?—
They all are gone, and thou art gone as
well!

130

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent
with gray;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;—
The foot less prompt to meet the morning
dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring
again.

140

And long the way appears, which seem'd so
short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of
Truth,

Thyrsis

Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and
bare!

Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil
grows,

And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would
fall.

150

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet!—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds
they come.

Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field!—'T is done; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the
Tree!

160

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush
about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow
bright,
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Hear it from thy broad lucent Arnovale
 (For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids
 keep
 The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale), 170

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
 Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland
 dim,
 These brambles pale with mist engar-
 landed,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
 To a boon southern country he is fled,
 And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train
 divine
 (And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
 I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine, 180

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!—
 Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
 In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityrses-song again
 Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth
 sing;
 Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
 And how a call celestial round him rang,
 And heavenward from the fountain-brink
 he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies. 190

Thyrsis

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.

Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.

Still, still these slopes, 't is clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull
the hay,

Woods with anemonies in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not
me?

200

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.

This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
'T is not in the world's market bought and
sold—

But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired. 210

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
Thou wanderdest with me for a little hour!

Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee
rest.

And this rude Cumnor ground,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet
fields,
Here cams't thou in thy jocund youthful
time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy
golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields. 220

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired
thy throat—
It fail'd, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst
not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering
way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night. 230

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
—Then through the great town's harsh,
heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:

Rugby Chapel

*Why faintest thou? I wonder'd till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining
still.
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns
the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.* 240
1866. *Matthew Arnold.*

RUGBY CHAPEL

November, 1857

COLDLY, sadly descends
The autumn-evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent;—hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows;—but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere, 10
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah!
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Of thy radiant vigour, again;
In the gloom of November we pass'd
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impair'd not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

20

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rest'd as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

30

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

40

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,

Rugby Chapel

Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground, 50
Sternly represses the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse

Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest!—this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?—
Most men eddy about 60
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die—
Perish;—and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild 70
Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,
Foam'd for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die 80
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path—
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance!—but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
Then on the height, comes the storm. 90
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breach'd
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep—the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin; alas, 100
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compress'd, we strain on,

Rugby Chapel

On—and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs—
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

110

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

120

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.

130

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing—to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given 140
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.
And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honour'd and blest
By former ages, who else—
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see— 150
Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
Seem'd but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good, 160
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God!—or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His, who unwillingly sees

Rugby Chapel

One of his little ones lost—
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died!

170

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending?—A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
—Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
Stagger for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.
Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardour divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languour is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.

180

190

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave! 200
Order, courage, return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

1867.

Matthew Arnold.

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE

DIED IN NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER, 1820

GREEN be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days!
None knew thee but to love thee,
Nor named thee but to praise. 4

Tears fell, when thou wert dying,
From eyes unused to weep,
And long, where thou art lying,
Will tears the cold turf steep. 8

When hearts, whose truth was proven,
Like thine, are laid in earth,
There should a wreath be woven
To tell the world their worth; 12

O Captain! My Captain!

And I, who woke each morrow
To clasp thy hand in mine,
Who shared thy joy and sorrow,
Whose weal and woe were thine. 16

It should be mine to braid it
Around thy faded brow,
But I 've in vain essayed it,
And feel I cannot now. 20

While memory bids me weep thee,
Nor thoughts nor words are free,
The grief is fixed too deeply
That mourns a man like thee. 24

1820.

Fitz-Greene Halleck.

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we
sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all
exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim
and daring:
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red!
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead. 8

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the
bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the
bugle trills;
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you
the shores a-crowding;
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager
faces turning;
Here, Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead. 16

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and
still;
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse
nor will;
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage
closed and done;
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with
object won:
Exult, O shores! and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead. 24

1865.

Walt. Whitman.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
 You, who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
 His length of shambling limb, his furrowed
 face, 4

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling
 hair,
 His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
 Of power or will to shine, of art to please; 8

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's
 laugh,
 Judging each step as though the way were
 plain,
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
 Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain,— 12

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
 The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
 Say, scurrile jester, is there room for *you*? 16

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Yes: he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen;
To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men. 20

My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more
true;
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows; 24

How humble, yet how hopeful he could be;
How, in good fortune and in ill, the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame. 28

He went about his work,—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand,—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace
command; 32

Who trusts the strength will with the burden
grow,
That God makes instruments to work his will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and
ill. 36

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,

Abraham Lincoln

As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting
mights,— 40

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark, that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid that o'erbears the boatman's toil,
The prairie hiding the mazed wanderer's
tracks, 44

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear,—
Such were the deeds that helped his youth to
train:
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may
bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and
grain. 48

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it; four long-suffering years'
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report lived through,
And then he heard the hisses changed to
cheers, 52

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering
mood,—
Till, as he came on light from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he
stood, 56

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest,
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest. 60

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good-will to men. 64

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame.
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high!
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came! 68

A deed accurst! Strokes have been struck
before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly
out, 72

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly
striven;
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven. 76

1865.

Tom Taylor.

CHARLES SUMNER

Garlands upon his grave,
And flowers upon his hearse,
And to the tender heart and brave
The tribute of this verse. 4

His was the troubled life,
The conflict and the pain,
The grief, the bitterness of strife,
The honor without stain. 8

Like Winkelried, he took
Into his manly breast
The sheaf of hostile spears, and broke
A path for the oppressed. 12

Then from the fatal field
Upon a nation's heart
Borne like a warrior on his shield!—
So should the brave depart. 16

Death takes us by surprise,
And stays our hurrying feet;
The great design unfinished lies,
Our lives are incomplete. 20

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

But in the dark unknown
Perfect their circles seem,
Even as a bridge's arch of stone
Is rounded in the stream. 24

Alike are life and death,
When life in death survives,
And the uninterrupted breath
Inspires a thousand lives. 28

Were a star quenched on high,
For ages would its light,
Still travelling downward from the sky,
Shine on our mortal sight. 32

So when a great man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men. 36

1874.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing Spring. 4

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;

Oh ! Snatch'd Away in Beauty's Bloom

But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love. 8

No wither'd witch shall here be seen ;
No goblins lead their nightly crew :
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew. 12

The redbreast oft at evening hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gather'd flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid. 16

When howling winds and beating rain,
In tempests shake the sylvan cell ;
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell ; 20

Each lonely scene shall thee restore ;
For thee the tear be duly shed ;
Beloved, till life can charm no more ;
And mourned, till Pity's self be dead. 24

1749.

William Collins.

OH ! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM

Oh ! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb ;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year ;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom : 5

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd the
dead! 10

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That Death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou, who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet. 15

1815.

Lord Byron.

LUCY

I

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell. 4

When she I loved look'd every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon. 8

Upon the moon I fix'd my eye,
All over the wide lea;

Lucy

With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me. 12

And now we reach'd the orchard-plot;
And, as we climb'd the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still. 16

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon. 20

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopp'd:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropp'd. 24

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!" 28

1799. 1800.

II

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love: 4

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky. 8

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me! 12

1799. 1800.

III

I TRAVELL'D among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee. 4

'T is past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more. 8

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherish'd turn'd her wheel
Beside an English fire. 12

Thy mornings show'd, thy nights conceal'd
The bowers where Lucy play'd;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes survey'd. 16

1799. 1807.

Lucy

IV

THREE years she grew in sun and shower;
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own. 6

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain. 12

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things. 18

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy. 24

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face. 30

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell." 36

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be. 42

1799. 1800.

V

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seem'd a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years. 4

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees. 8

1799. 1800.

William Wordsworth.

ROSE 'AYLMER

AN what avails the sceptred race,
Ah what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

1806.

Walter Savage Landor.



THE MAID'S LAMENT

I LOVED him not; and yet, now he is gone,
I feel I am alone.
I checked him while he spoke; yet could he
speak,
Alas! I would not check.
For reasons not to love him once I sought,
And wearied all my thought
To vex myself and him: I now would give
My love, could he but live
Who lately lived for me, and when he found
'T was vain, in holy ground 10

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

He hid his face amid the shades of death.
I waste for him my breath
Who wasted his for me; but mine returns,
And this lorn bosom burns
With stifling heat, heaving it up in sleep,
And waking me to weep
Tears that had melted his soft heart: for years
Wept he as bitter tears.
“Merciful God!” such was his latest prayer,
“These may she never share!” 20
Quieter is his breath, his breast more cold
Than daisies in the mould,
Where children spell, athwart the churchyard
gate,
His name and life’s brief date.
Pray for him, gentle souls, whoe’er ye be,
And O! pray too for me!
1834. ● *Walter Savage Landor.*

REQUIESCAT

STREW on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too! 4

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be. 8

Evelyn Hope

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round. 12

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death. 16

1853.

Matthew Arnold.

EVELYN HOPE

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;
Little has yet been changed, I think:
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's
chink. 8

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,—
And the sweet white brow is all of her. 16

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?

What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire and dew—

And, just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, naught beside? 24

No, indeed! for God above

Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love:

I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you. 32

But the time will come,—at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall
say)

In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's
red—

And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old life's stead. 40

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,

May and Death

Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me:
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? Let us see! 48

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank
young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's
young gold.
So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep:
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret: go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and under-
stand. 56

1855.

Robert Browning.

MAY AND DEATH

I WISH that when you died last May,
Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of Spring's delightful things;
Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too. 4

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
Moon-births and the long evening-ends. 8

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

So, for their sake, be May still May!
Let their new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me: I bid
Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold. 12

Only, one little sight, one plant,
Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
Is Spring's blood, spilt its leaves
between,— 16

That, they might spare; a certain wood
Might miss the plant; their loss were small:
But I,—whene'er the leaf grows there,
Its drop comes from my heart, that's all. 20
1857. *Robert Browning.*

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

"Drowned! drowned!"—HAMLET

ONE more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death! 4

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair! 8

The Bridge of Sighs

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements,
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.— 14

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her,
Now is pure womanly. 20

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny,
Rash and undutiful;
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful. 26

Still, for all slips of hers,—
One of Eve's family,—
Wipe those poor lips of hers,
Oozing so clammy. 30

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,—
Her fair auburn tresses,—
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home? 35

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other? 43

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none. 48

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed,—
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged. 55

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night. 62

The Bridge of Sighs

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river;
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!

71

In she plunged boldly,—
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute Man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

79

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

83

Ere her limbs, frigidly,
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently, kindly,
Smooth and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

89

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Dreadfully staring
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity. 94

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast! 102

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour! 106

1844.

Thomas Hood.

LAMENT OF THE IRISH EMIGRANT

I 'm sittin' on the stile, Mary,
Where we sat side by side
On a bright May mornin' long ago,
When first you were my bride;
The corn was springin' fresh and green,
And the lark sang loud and high—
And the red was on your lip, Mary,
And the love-light in your eye. 8

Lament of the Irish Emigrant

The *place* is little changed, Mary,
The day is bright as then,
The lark's loud song is in my ear,
And the corn is green again ;
But I miss the soft clasp of your hand,
And your breath warm on my cheek,
And I still keep list'ning for the words
You never more will speak. 16

'T is but a step down yonder lane,
And the little church stands near,
The church where we were wed, Mary,
I see the spire from here.
But the graveyard lies between, Mary,
And my step might break your rest—
For I've laid you, darling! down to sleep,
With your baby on your breast. 24

I'm very lonely now, Mary,
For the poor make no new friends,
But, oh! they love the better still,
The few our Father sends!
And you were all I had, Mary,
My blessin' and my pride:
There's nothin' left to care for now,
Since my poor Mary died. 32

Yours was the good, brave heart, Mary,
That still kept hoping on,
When the trust in God had left my soul,
And my arm's young strength was gone:

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

There was comfort ever on your lip,
And the kind look on your brow—
I bless you, Mary, for that same,
Though you cannot hear me now. 40

I thank you for the patient smile
When your heart was fit to break,
When the hunger pain was gnawin' there,
And you hid it, for *my* sake!
I bless you for the pleasant word,
When your heart was sad and sore—
Oh! I 'm thankful you are gone, Mary,
Where grief can't reach you more! 48

I 'm biddin' you a long farewell,
My Mary—kind and true!
But I 'll not forget you, darling!
In the land I 'm goin' to;
They say there 's bread and work for all,
And the sun shines always there—
But I 'll not forget old Ireland,
Were it fifty times as fair! 56

And often in those grand old woods
I 'll sit, and shut my eyes,
And my heart will travel back again
To the place where Mary lies;
And I 'll think I see the little stile
Where we sat side by side:
And the springin' corn, and the bright May
morn,
When first you were my bride. 64

1845.

Helen Selina, Lady Dufferin.

THE DEATH BED

WE watch'd her breathing thro' the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro. 4

So silently we seem'd to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out. 8

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied—
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died. 12

For when the morn came dim and sad
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had
Another morn than ours. 16

1831.

Thomas Hood.

RESIGNATION

THERE is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair! 4

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted! 8

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise. 12

We see but dimly through the mists and vapors;
Amid these earthly damps
What seem to us but sad, funeral tapers
May be heaven's distant lamps. 16

There is no Death! What seems so is transi-
tion;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death. 20

She is not dead,—the child of our affection,—
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule. 24

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead. 28

Resignation

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air ;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair. 32

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though un-
spoken,
May reach her where she lives. 36

Not as a child shall we again behold her ;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child ; 40

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace ;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face. 44

And though at times impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the
ocean,
That cannot be at rest,— 48

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay ;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way. 52

1849.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

SHE CAME AND WENT

As a twig trembles, which a bird
Lights on to sing, then leaves unbent,
So is my memory thrilled and stirred ;—
I only know she came and went. 4

As clasps some lake, by gusts unriven,
The blue dome's measureless content,
So my soul held that moment's heaven ;—
I only know she came and went. 8

As, at one bound, our swift spring heaps
The orchards full of bloom and scent,
So clove her May my wintry sleeps ;—
I only know she came and went. 12

An angel stood and met my gaze,
Through the low doorway of my tent ;
The tent is struck, the vision stays ;—
I only know she came and went, 16

Oh, when the room grows slowly dim,
And life's last oil is nearly spent,
One gush of light these eyes will brim,
Only to think she came and went. 20

1849. *James Russell Lowell.*

THE FIRST SNOW-FALL

THE snow had begun in the gloaming,
And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
With a silence deep and white. 4

Every pine and fir and hemlock
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree
Was ridged inch deep with pearl. 8

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara
Came Chanticleer's muffled crow,
The stiff rails softened to swan's-down,
And still fluttered down the snow. 12

I stood and watched by the window
The noiseless work of the sky,
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,
Like brown leaves whirling by. 16

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn
Where a little headstone stood;
How the flakes were folding it gently,
As did robins the babes in the wood. 20

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Up spoke our own little Mabel
Saying, " Father, who makes it snow? "
And I told of the good All-father
Who cares for us here below. 24

Again I looked at the snow-fall,
And thought of the leaden sky
That arched o'er our first great sorrow,
When that mound was heaped so high. 28

I remembered the gradual patience
That fell from that cloud like snow,
Flake by flake, healing and hiding
The scar that renewed our woe. 32

And again to the child I whispered,
" The snow that husheth all,
Darling, the merciful Father
Alone can make it fall! " 36

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her ;
And she, kissing back, could not know
That *my* kiss was given to her sister,
Folded close under deepening snow. 40

1849. *James Russell Lowell.*

A DEATH-BED

HER suffering ended with the day,
Yet lived she at its close,
And breathed the long, long night away
In a statue-like repose. 4

My Sister's Sleep

But when the sun in all his state
Illumed the eastern skies,
She passed through Glory's morning gate
And walked in Paradise! 8

c. 1840.

James Aldrich.

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

SHE fell asleep on Christmas Eve:
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweigh'd
The pain nought else might yet relieve. 4

Our mother, who had leaned all day
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray. 8

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed. 12

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
The hollow halo it was in
Was like an icy crystal cup. 16

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Through the small room, with subtle sound
Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round. 20

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank ;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights. 24

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling
years
Heard in each hour, crept off ; and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs. 28

Our mother rose from where she sat :
Her needles, as she laid them down,
Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled : no other noise than that. 32

"Glory unto the Newly Born !"
So, as said angels, she did say ;
Because we were in Christmas Day,
Though it would still be long till morn. 36

Just then in the room over us
There was a pushing back of chairs,
As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose. 40

The Mother's Dream

With anxious softly-stepping haste
Our mother went where Margaret lay,
Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they
Have broken her long watched-for rest! 44

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned;
But suddenly turned back again;
And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned. 48

For my part, I but hid my face,
And held my breath, and spoke no word:
There was none spoken; but I heard
The silence for a little space. 52

Our mother bowed herself and wept:
And both my arms fell, and I said,
“God knows I knew that she was dead.”
And there, all white, my sister slept. 56

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
A little after twelve o'clock,
We said, ere the first quarter struck,
“Christ's blessing on the newly born!” 60

1847. 1850. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti.*

THE MOTHER'S DREAM

I 'd a dream to-night
As I fell asleep,
Oh! the touching sight
Makes me still to weep:

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Of my little lad,
Gone to leave me sad,
Aye, the child I had,
But was not to keep. 8

As in heaven high,
I my child did seek,
There, in train, came by
Children fair and meek,
Each in lily-white,
With a lamp alight;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak. 16

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
Oh! it did not burn;
He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half turn'd about,
"Your tears put it out;
Mother, never mourn." 24

1868.

William Barnes.

THE TOYS

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,

The Toys

—His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet 10
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there
with careful art, 20
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said:
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood,
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less 30
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou 'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

1877.

Coventry Patmore.

REQUIEM

UNDER the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

1884. 1887.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

IN HARBOR¹

I THINK it is over, over,
I think it is over at last:
Voices of foeman and lover,
The sweet and the bitter have passed:
Life, like a tempest of ocean
Hath outblown its ultimate blast:
There 's but a faint sobbing seaward
While the calm of the tide deepens leeward,
And behold! like the welcoming quiver
Of heart-pulses throbb'd through the river,
Those lights in the harbor at last,
The heavenly harbor at last!

12

¹ Copyright, 1882, D. Lothrop & Co., Boston.

Epilogue

I feel it is over! over!

For the winds and the waters surcease;

Ah, few were the days of the rover

That smiled in the beauty of peace,

And distant and dim was the omen

That hinted redress or release!

From the ravage of life, and its riot,

What marvel I yearn for the quiet

Which bides in the harbor at last,—

For the lights, with their welcoming quiver

That throbs through the sanctified river,

Which girdle the harbor at last,

This heavenly harbor at last?

24

I know it is over, over

I know it is over at last!

Down sail! the sheathed anchor uncover,

For the stress of the voyage has passed:

Life, like a tempest of ocean,

Hath outbreathed its ultimate blast:

There's but a faint sobbing seaward,

While the calm of the tide deepens leeward;

And behold! like the welcoming quiver

Of heart-pulses throbbed through the river,

Those lights in the harbor at last,

The heavenly harbor at last!

36

1882.

Paul Hamilton Hayne.

EPILOGUE

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,

When you set your fancies free,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Will they pass to where—by death, fools **think**,
Imprisoned—

Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you
loved so,

—Pity me? 5

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!

What had I on earth to do

With the slothful, with the mawkish, the
unmanly?

Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I **drivel**

—Being—who? 10

One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,

Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph,

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake. 15

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time

Greet the unseen with a cheer!

Bid him forward, breast and back as either
should be,

"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare
ever

There as here!" 20

1889.

Robert Browning.

PROSPICE

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible
form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit
attained,
And the barriers fall, 10
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be
gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and
forebore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my
peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's
arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold. 20

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

For sudden the worst turns the best to the
 brave,
 The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that
 rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of
 pain,
 Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee
 again,
And with God be the rest!

1861. 1864.

Robert Browning.

HYMNS AND POEMS OF FAITH

1871

A CHILD MY CHOICE

LET folly praise that fancy loves, I praise and love
that Child

Whose heart no thought, whose tongue no word,
whose hand no deed defiled.

I praise Him most, I love Him best, all praise and
love is His;

While Him I love, in Him I live, and cannot live
amiss.

Love's sweetest mark, laud's highest theme,
man's most desired light,

To love Him life, to leave Him death, to live in
Him delight.

He mine by gift, I His by debt, thus each to other
due,

First friend He was, best friend He is, all times
will try Him true.

Though young, yet wise, though small, yet strong;
though man, yet God He is; ⁹

As wise He knows, as strong He can, as God He
loves to bliss.

His knowledge rules, His strength defends, His
love doth cherish all;

His birth our joy, His life our light, His death
our end of thrall.

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Alas! He weeps, He sighs, He pants, yet do His
angels sing;
Out of His tears, His sighs and throbs, doth
bud a joyful spring.
Almighty Babe, whose tender arms can force all
foes to fly,
Correct my faults, protect my life, direct me
when I die! 16

Robert Southwell.

THE ELIXIR

TEACH me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee. 4

Not rudely, as a beast,
To run into an action;
But still to make Thee prepossesst,
And give it his perfection. 8

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye;
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the Heav'n espy. 12

All may of Thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean
Which with his tincture, for Thy sake,
Will not grow bright and clean. 16

Discipline

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that and th' action fine. 20

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told. 24

1633.

George Herbert.

DISCIPLINE

THROW away Thy rod,
Throw away Thy wrath;
O my God,
Take the gentle path. 4

For my heart's desire
Unto Thine is bent;
I aspire
To a full consent. 8

Not a word or look
I affect to own,
But by book,
And Thy Book alone. 12

Though I fail, I weep;
Though I halt in pace,
Yet I creep
To the throne of grace. 16

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Then let wrath remove;
Love will do the deed;
For with love
Stony hearts will bleed. 16

Love is swift of foot;
Love's a man of war,
And can shoot,
And can hit from far. 24

Who can 'scape his bow?
That which wrought on Thee,
Brought Thee low,
Needs must work on me. 28

Throw away Thy rod:
Though man frailties hath,
Thou art God;
Throw away Thy wrath. 32

1633.

George Herbert.

EASTER

I got me flowers to straw Thy way,
I got me boughs off many a tree;
But Thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st Thy sweets along with
Thee. 4

The sun arising in the East,
Though he give light, and th' East
perfume,

The Pulley

If they should offer to contest
With Thy arising, they presume. 8

Yet though my flowers be lost, they say
A heart can never come too late ;
Teach it to sing Thy praise this day,
And then this day my life shall date. 12

1633.

George Herbert.

THE PULLEY

WHEN God at first made Man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by—
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can ;
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span. 5

•So strength first made a way,
Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honour,
pleasure ;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay. 10

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature :
So both should losers be. 15

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness ;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast. 20

1633.

George Herbert.

VIRTUE

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright !
The bridal of the earth and sky—
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night ;
For thou must die. 4

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die. 8

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die. 12

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives ;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives. 16

1633.

George Herbert.

LOVE TRIUMPHANT

E'EN like two little bank-dividing brooks,
That wash the pebbles with their wanton
streams,
And having ranged and search'd a thousand
nooks,
Meet both at length in silver-breasted Thames,
Where in a greater current they conjoin:
So I my Best-Belovèd's am; so He is mine. 6

E'en so we met; and after long pursuit,
E'en so we join'd: we both became entire;
No need for either to renew a suit,
For I was flax and he was flames of fire:
Our firm-united souls did more than twine;
So I my Best-Belovèd's am; so He is mine. 12

If all those glittering Monarchs that command
The servile quarters of this earthly ball,
Should tender, in exchange, their shares of land,
I would not change my fortunes for them all:
Their wealth is but a counter to my coin:
The world's but theirs; but my Belovèd's
mine. 18

1635?

Francis Quarles.

THE WILL

BEFORE I sigh my last gasp, let me breathe,
Great Love, some legacies : here I bequeathe
Mine eyes to Argus, if mine eyes can see ;
If they be blind, then, Love, I give them thee ;
My tongue to Fame ; to ambassadors mine ears ;
 To women or the sea, my tears ;
 Thou, Love, hast taught me heretofore
 By making me serve her who had twenty more,
That I should give to none, but such as had too
 much before. 9

My constancy I to the planets give ;
My truth to them who at the court do live ;
Mine ingenuity and openness,
To Jesuits ; to buffoons my pensiveness ;
My silence to any, who abroad have been ;
 My money to a Capuchin :
 Thou, Love, taught'st me, by appointing me
 To love there, where no love received can be,
Only to give to such as have an incapacity. 18

My faith I give to Roman Catholics ;
All my good works unto the schismatics
Of Amsterdam ; my best civility
And courtship to an University ;

The Will

My modesty I give to shoulders bare ;
My patience let gamesters share :
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her that holds my love disparity,
Only to give to those that count my gifts in-
dignity. 27

I give my reputation to those
Which were my friends ; mine industry to foes ;
To schoolmen I bequeathe my doubtfulness ;
My sickness to physicians, or excess ;
To Nature all that I in rhyme have writ ;
And to my company my wit :
Thou, Love, by making me adore
Her, who begot this love in me before,
Taught'st me to make, as though I gave, when I
do but restore. 36

To him, for whom the passing-bell next tolls,
I give my physic-books ; my written rolls
Of moral counsels I to Bedlam give ;
My brazen medals unto them which live
In want of bread ; to them which pass among
All foreigners, mine English tongue :
Thou, Love, by making me love one
Who thinks her friendship a fit portion
For younger lovers, dost my gifts thus dispro-
portion. 45

Therefore I'll give no more, but I'll undo
The world by dying ; because Love dies too.

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Then all your beauties will be no more worth
Than gold in mines, where none doth draw it
forth;

And all your graces no more use shall have,
Than a sun-dial in a grave:

Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her, who doth neglect both me and thee,
To invent and practise this one way to annihilate
all three.

54

1633.

Dr. John Donne.

LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

IN the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

4

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

8

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

12

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope, but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

16

Litany to the Holy Spirit

When his potion and his pill
Has, or none, or little skill,
Meet for nothing, but to kill;
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 20

When the passing bell doth toll,
And the Furies in a shoal
Come to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 24

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 28

When the priest his last hath pray'd,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decay'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 32

When, God knows, I 'm toss'd about,
Either with despair or doubt;
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 36

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 40

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears, and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 44

When the Judgment is reveal'd,
And that open'd which was seal'd,
When to Thee I have appeal'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 48

1647.

Robert Herrick.

PEACE

My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentry
All skilful in the wars:
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crown'd with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious Friend,
And—O my soul, awake!— 10
Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease.

The Retreat

Leave then thy foolish ranges;
For none can thee secure
But One who never changes—
Thy God, thy life, thy cure. 20

1650

Henry Vaughan.

THE RETREAT

HAPPY those early days, when I
Shin'd in my Angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two from my first Love,
And looking back, at that short space
Could see a glimpse of his bright face; 10
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness. 20

O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

That I might once more reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train ;
From whence th' enlighten'd spirit sees
That shady City of Palm-trees !
But ah ! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way !
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move ; 30
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

1650.

Henry Vaughan.

BERMUDAS

WHERE the remote Bermudas ride,
In the ocean's bosom unespied,
From a small boat that row'd along
The listening winds received this song :
" What should we do but sing His praise
That led us through the watery maze
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own ?
Where He the huge sea monsters wracks,
That lift the deep upon their backs ; 10
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms, and prelate's rage.
He gave us this eternal spring
Which here enamels everything,
And sends the fowls to us in care
On daily visits through the air ;

The Invitation

He hangs in shades the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranates close
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows: 20
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,
And throws the melons at our feet;
But apples plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice;
With cedars chosen by His hand
From Lebanon He stores the land;
And makes the hollow seas that roar
Proclaim the ambergris on shore;
He cast (of which we rather boast)
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast; 30
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound His name.
Oh! let our voice His praise exalt
Till it arrive at Heaven's vault,
Which thence (perhaps) rebounding, may
Echo beyond the Mexique bay!"
—Thus sung they in the English boat
A holy and a cheerful note;
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time. 40

1681.

Andrew Marvell.

THE INVITATION

LORD, what unvalued pleasures crown'd
The days of old;
When Thou were so familiar found,
Those days were gold;— 4

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

When Abram wish'd Thou couldst afford
With him to feast;
When Lot but said, "Turn in, my Lord,"
Thou wert his guest. 8

But, ah! this heart of mine doth pant,
And beat for Thee;
Yet Thou art strange, and wilt not grant
Thyself to me. 12

What, shall Thy people be so dear
To Thee no more?
Or is not heaven to earth as near
As heretofore? 16

The famish'd raven's hoarser cry
Finds out Thine ear;
My soul is famish'd, and I die
Unless Thou hear. 20

O Thou great Alpha! Kings of kings!
Or bow to me,
Or lend my soul seraphic wings,
To get to Thee. 24

Anonymous.

A HYMN OF TRUST

LORD, it belongs not to my care,
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give. 4

The Voice of the Heavens

If life be long I will be glad,
That I may long obey;
If short—yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day? 8

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than he went through before;
He that unto God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door. 12

Come, Lord, when grace has made me meet
Thy blessèd face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be! 16

Then I shall end my sad complaints,
And weary, sinful days;
And join with the the triumphant saints,
To sing Jehovah's praise. 20

My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 't is enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him. 24

1683.

Richard Baxter.

THE VOICE OF THE HEAVENS

THE spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Th' unwearied Sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes, to every land,
The work of an Almighty hand. 8

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly, to the listening Earth,
Repeats the story of her birth:
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole. 16

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
For ever singing as they shine:
"The Hand that made us is divine." 24

1712.

Joseph Addison.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

FATHER of all! in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord! 4

The Universal Prayer

Thou Great First Cause, least understood,
Who all my sense confined
To know but this, that thou art good,
And that myself am blind: 8

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill;
And binding Nature fast in Fate,
Left free the human Will. 12

What Conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do;
This teach me more than Hell to shun,
That more than Heaven pursue. 16

What blessings thy free bounty gives
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives;
T' enjoy is to obey. 20

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round. 24

Let not this weak unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge thy foe. 28

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

If I am wrong, O teach my heart
To find that better way. 32

Save me alike from foolish Pride
And impious Discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent. 36

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see:
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me. 40

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
Since quickened by thy breath;
O lead me, wheresoe'er I go,
Through this day's life or death! 44

This day be bread and peace my lot:
All else beneath the sun
Thou know'st if best bestowed or not,
And let thy will be done. 48

To Thee, whose temple is all Space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies,
One chorus let all Being raise,
All Nature's incense rise! 52

1738.

Alexander Pope.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL

VITAL spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, O quit this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
Oh, the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life! 6

Hark! they whisper; Angels say,
Sister Spirit, come away!
What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my Soul, can this be Death? 12

The world recedes; it disappears!
Heav'n opens on my eyes! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O Grave! where is thy Victory?
O Death! where is thy Sting? 18

1712.

Alexander Pope.

THE QUIET HEART

QUIET, Lord, my froward heart :
Make me teachable and mild,
Upright, simple, free from art,—
Make me as a weanèd child :
From distrust and envy free,
Pleased with all that pleases Thee. 6

What Thou shalt to-day provide,
Let me as a child receive ;
What to-morrow may betide,
Calmly to Thy wisdom leave ;
'T is enough that Thou wilt care :
Why should I the burden bear? 12

As a little child relies
On a care beyond his own,
Knows he 's neither strong nor wise,
Fears to stir a step alone ;
Let me thus with Thee abide,
As my Father, Guard, and Guide. 18

1779.

John Newton.

REFUGE

JESU, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high :

Refuge

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last! 8

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee:
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me!
All my trust on Thee is stay'd,
All my help from Thee I bring:
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing! 16

Wilt Thou not regard my call?
Wilt Thou not accept my prayer?
Lo! I sink, I faint, I fall—
Lo! on Thee I cast my care!
Reach me out Thy gracious hand:
While I of Thy strength receive,
Hoping against hope I stand,
Dying, and behold I live! 24

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within:—
Thou of Life the Fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart,—
Rise to all eternity! 32

THE GOLDEN DOOR

THE door of death is made of gold,
That mortal eyes cannot behold:
But, when the mortal eyes are closed,
And cold and pale the limbs reposed,
The Soul awakes, and, wondering, sees
In her mild hand the golden keys.
The grave is Heaven's golden gate,
And rich and poor around it wait:
O Shepherdess of England's fold,
Behold this gate of pearl and gold! 20

To dedicate to England's Queen
The visions that my soul has seen,
And by her kind permission bring
What I have borne on solemn wing
From the vast regions of the grave,
Before her throne my wings I wave,
Bowing before my sovereign's feet.
The Grave produced these blossoms sweet,
In mild repose from earthly strife;
The blossoms of eternal life. 20

1808.

William Blake.

MORNING

HUES of the rich unfolding morn,
That, ere the glorious sun be born,
By some soft touch invisible
Around his path are taught to swell;— 4

Thou rustling breeze, so fresh and gay,
That dancest forth at opening day,
And brushing by with joyous wing,
Wakenest each little leaf to sing;— 8

Ye fragrant clouds of dewy steam,
By which deep grove and tangled stream
Pay, for soft rains in season given,
Their tribute to the genial heaven;— 12

Why waste your treasures of delight
Upon our thankless, joyless sight,
Who day by day to sin awake,
Seldom of Heaven and you partake? 16

Oh! timely happy, timely wise,
Hearts that with rising morn arise!
Eyes that the beam celestial view,
Which evermore makes all things new! 20

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

New every morning is the love
Our wakening and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life, and power, and thought. 24

New mercies, each returning day,
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of
Heaven. 28

If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice. 32

Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of Heaven in each we see:
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross and care. 36

As for some dear familiar strain
Untired we ask, and ask again,
Ever, in its melodious store,
Finding a spell unheard before— 40

Such is the bliss of souls serene,
When they have sworn, and steadfast mean,
Counting the cost, in all t' espy
Their God, in all themselves deny. 44

Evening

Oh, could we learn that sacrifice,
What lights would all around us rise!
How would our hearts with wisdom talk
Along Life's dullest, dreariest walk! 48

We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky: 52

The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God. 56

Seek we no more; content with these,
Let present Rapture, Comfort, Ease,
As Heaven shall bid them, come and go—
The secret this of Rest below. 60

Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
Fit us for perfect Rest above;
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray. 64

1827.

John Keble.

EVENING

'T is gone, that bright and orbèd blaze,
Fast fading from our wistful gaze;
Yon mantling cloud has hid from sight
The last faint pulse of quivering light. 4

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In darkness and in weariness
The traveller on his way must press ;
No gleam to watch on tree or tower,
Whiling away the lonesome hour. 8

Sun of my soul! Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near :
Oh! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes. 12

When round thy wondrous works below
My searching rapturous glance I throw,
Tracing out Wisdom, Power, and Love,
In earth or sky, in stream or grove— 16

Or by the light Thy words disclose
Watch Time's full river as it flows,
Scanning Thy gracious Providence,
Where not too deep for mortal sense; 20

When with dear friends sweet talk I hold,
And all the flowers of life unfold—
Let not my heart within me burn,
Except in all I Thee discern. 24

When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest
For ever on my Saviour's breast. 28

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live:

Evening

Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without thee I dare not die. 32

Thou Framer of light and dark,
Steer through the tempest Thine own ark:
Amid the howling wintry sea
We are in port if we have Thee. 36

The Rulers of this Christian land,
'Twixt Thee and us ordained to stand,—
Guide Thou their course, O Lord, aright,
Let all do all as in Thy sight. 40

Oh! by Thine own sad burthen, borne
So meekly up the hill of scorn,
Teach Thou Thy Priests their daily cross
To bear as Thine, nor count it loss! 44

If some poor wandering child of Thine
Have spurn'd, to-day, the voice divine,
Now, Lord, the gracious work begin;
Let him no more lie down in sin. 48

Watch by the sick: enrich the poor
With blessings from Thy boundless store:
Be every mourner's sleep to-night
Like infants' slumbers, pure and light. 52

Come near and bless us when we wake,
Ere through the world our way we take,
Till in the ocean of Thy love
We lose ourselves in Heaven above. 56

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

It was the calm and silent night !
Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to night,
And now was Queen of land and sea.
No sound was heard of clashing wars ;
Peace brooded o'er the hush'd domain ;
Apollo, Pallas, Jove and Mars,
Held undisturb'd their ancient reign,
In the solemn midnight
Centuries ago !

10

'T was in the calm and silent night !
The senator of haughty Rome
Impatient urged his chariot's flight,
From lordly revel rolling home.
Triumphal arches gleaming swell
His breast with thoughts of boundless sway ;
What reck'd the Roman what befell
A paltry province far away,
In the solemn midnight
Centuries ago !

20

Within that province far away
Went plodding home a weary boor :
A streak of light before him lay,
Fall'n through a half-shut stable door

A Christmas Hymn

Across his path. He pass'd—for nought
Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars! his only thought;
The air how calm and cold and thin,
In the solemn midnight
Centuries ago!

30

O strange indifference!—low and high
Drows'd over common joys and cares:
The earth was still—but knew not why;
The world was listening—unawares.
How calm a moment may precede
One that shall thrill the world for ever!
To that still moment none would heed,
Man's doom was link'd, no more to sever,
In the solemn midnight
Centuries ago!

40

It is the calm and silent night!
A thousand bells ring out, and throw
Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
The darkness, charm'd and holy *now*.
The night that erst no name had worn,
To it a happy name is given;
For in that stable lay new-born
The peaceful Prince of Earth and Heaven,
In the solemn midnight
Centuries ago!

50

1837.

Alfred Domett.

ABIDE WITH ME

ABIDE with me! Fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me! 4

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away:
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me! 8

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word,
But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
Come, not to sojourn, but abide, with me! 12

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings:
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea:—
Come, Friend of sinners, and thus bide with
me! 16

Thou on my head in early youth didst smile,
And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee.
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me! 20

The Will of God

I need Thy presence every passing hour :
What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's
power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me! 24

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless :
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is Death's sting? where, Grave, thy
victory?
—I triumph still, if Thou abide with me. 28

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the
skies :
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain
shadows flee :—
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me! 32
1850. *Henry Francis Lyte.*

THE WILL OF GOD

I WORSHIP Thee, sweet Will of God!
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live, I seem
To love Thee more and more. 4

Thou wert the end, the blessed rule
Of our Saviour's toils and tears;
Thou wert the passion of His Heart
Those Three-and-thirty years. 8

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And He hath breathed into my soul
A special love of Thee,
A love to lose my will in His,
And by that loss be free. 12

He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost ;
God's Will is sweetest to him, when
It triumphs at his cost. 16

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison-walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee. 20

1849.

Frederick William Faber

GOD'S WAY

THY way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be !
Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me. 4

Smooth let it be or rough,
It will be still the best ;
Winding or straight, it leads
Right onward to Thy rest. 8

I dare not choose my lot ;
I would not, if I might ;
Choose Thou for me, my God ;
So shall I walk aright. 12

Sensitiveness

The kingdom that I seek
Is Thine; so let the way
That leads to it be Thine;
Else I must surely stray. 16

Take Thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill,
As best to Thee may seem;
Choose Thou my good and ill; 20

Choose Thou for me my friends,
My sickness or my health;
Choose Thou my cares for me,
My poverty or wealth. 24

Not mine, not mine the choice,
In things or great or small;
Be Thou my guide, my strength,
My wisdom, and my all! 28

1857.

Horatius Bonar.

SENSITIVENESS

TIME was, I shrank from what was right
From fear of what was wrong;
I would not brave the sacred fight,
Because the foe was strong. 4

But now I cast that finer sense
And sorer shame aside;

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Such dread of sin was indolence,
Such aim at Heaven was pride. 8

So, when my Saviour calls, I rise
And calmly do my best ;
Leaving to Him, with silent eyes
Of hope and fear, the rest. 12

I step, I mount where He has led ;
Men count my haltings o'er ;—
I know them ; yet, though self I dread,
I love His precept more. 16

1833. 1836.

John Henry Newman.

FLOWERS WITHOUT FRUIT

PRUNE thou thy words, the thoughts control
That o'er thee swell and throng ;
They will condense within thy soul,
And change to purpose strong. 4

But he who lets his feelings run
In soft luxurious flow,
Shrinks when hard service must be done,
And faints at every woe. 8

Faith's meanest deed more favour bears,
Where hearts and wills are weigh'd,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom their hour and fade. 12

1833.

John Henry Newman.

“O MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR
INVISIBLE!”

O MAY I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
Of miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like
stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's
search
To vaster issues.

10

So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonized
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies, 20
Die in the large and charitable air.

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And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love— 30
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb,
Unread forever.

 This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love, 40
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

1867. 1874.

Marian Evans Cross.

A LIFE HID WITH CHRIST

I HAVE a life with Christ to live,
But, ere I live it, must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
Of this and that book's date?

Constancy

I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die;—
And must I wait, till science give
All doubts a full reply?

8

Nay rather, while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life and death and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at Thy feet
Take but the lowest seat,
And hear Thine awful voice repeat
In gentlest accents, heavenly sweet,
Come unto Me, and rest:
Believe Me, and be blest.

18

John Campbell Choirp.

CONSTANCY

'Twixt gleams of joy and clouds of doubt
Our feelings come and go;
Our best estate is toss'd about
In ceaseless ebb and flow.

4

No mood of feeling, form of thought,
Is constant for a day;
But Thou, O Lord! Thou changest not;
The same Thou art always.

8

I grasp Thy strength, make it mine own,
My heart with peace is blest;

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I lose my hold, and then comes down
Darkness and cold unrest. 12

Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold of Thee,—
In this alone rejoice with awe;
Thy mighty grasp of me. 16

Out of that weak unquiet drift
That comes but to depart,
To that pure Heaven my spirit lift
Where Thou unchanging art. 20

Lay hold of me with Thy strong grasp,
Let Thy Almighty arm
In its embrace my weakness clasp,
And I shall fear no harm. 24

Thy purpose of eternal good
Let me but surely know;
On this I 'll lean, let changing mood
And feeling come or go; 28

Glad when Thy sunshine fills my soul;
Not lorn when clouds o'ercast;
Since Thou within Thy sure control
Of Love dost hold me fast. 32

1864?

John Campbell Shairp.

MY PSALM

I MOURN no more my vanished years :
 Beneath a tender rain,
And April rain of smiles and tears,
 My heart is young again. 4

The west-winds blow, and, singing low,
 I hear the glad streams run ;
The windows of my soul I throw
 Wide open to the sun. 8

No longer forward nor behind
 I look in hope or fear ;
But, grateful, take the good I find,
 The best of now and here. 12

I plough no more a desert land,
 To harvest weed and tare ;
The manna dropping from God's hand
 Rebukes my painful care. 16

I break my pilgrim staff,—I lay
 Aside the toiling oar ;
The angel sought so far away
 I welcome at my door. 20

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The airs of spring may never play
Among the ripening corn,
Nor freshness of the flowers of May
Blow through the autumn morn; 24

Yet shall the blue-eyed gentian look
Through fringed lids to heaven,
And the pale aster in the brook
Shall see its image given;— 28

The woods shall wear their robes of praise,
The south-wind softly sigh,
And sweet, calm days in golden haze
Melt down the amber sky. 32

Not less shall manly deed and word
Rebuke an age of wrong;
The graven flowers that wreath the sword
Make not the blade less strong. 36

But smiting hands shall learn to heal,—
To build as to destroy;
Nor less my heart for others feel
That I the more enjoy. 40

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told! 44

Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track;—

My Psalm

That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved,
His chastening turned me back;— 48

That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good;— 52

That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight;— 56

That care and trial seem at last,
Through Memory's sunset air,
Like mountain-ranges overpast,
In purple distance fair;— 60

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm. 64

And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west-winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day. 68

1859.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

PARADAISI GLORIA

THERE is a city, builded by no hand,
And unapproachable by sea or shore,
And unassailable by any band
Of storming soldiery for evermore. 4

There we no longer shall divide our time
By acts or pleasures,—doing petty things
Of work or warfare, merchandise or rhyme;
But we shall sit beside the silver springs 8

That flow from God's own footstool, and behold
Sages and martyrs, and those blessed few
Who loved us once and were beloved of old
To dwell with them and walk with them
anew, 12

In alterations of sublime repose,
Musical motion, the perpetual play
Of every faculty that Heaven bestows
Through the bright, busy, and eternal day. 16

1872.

Thomas William Parsons.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

O FRIENDS! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet aisles of prayer,
Glad witness to your zeal for God
And love of man I bear. 4

The Eternal Goodness

I trace your lines of argument ;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong. 8

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds :
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads. 12

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?
Who talks of scheme and plan?
The Lord is God! He needeth not
The poor device of man. 16

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod ;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of God. 20

Ye praise His justice ; even such
His pitying love I deem :
Ye seek a king ; I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam. 24

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss ;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross. 28

More than our schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas ! I know

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show. 32

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim. 36

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin. 40

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good! 44

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me. 48

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate,—I know
His goodness and His love. 52

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right. 56

The Eternal Goodness

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong. 60

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies. 64

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain. 68

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts he gave,
And plead His love for love. 72

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore. 76

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care. 80

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,

Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee!

1865.

John Greenleaf Whittier

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

17

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INDEX OF FIRST LINES

	VOL.	PAGE
Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;	VI	180
Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)	II	121
About Glenkindie and his man,	I	48
A Chieftain to the Highlands bound	I	285
Across the narrow beach we flit,	III	70
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;	III	150
A fleet with flags arrayed	I	228
A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,	IV	215
Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,	V	151
Ah, Chloris! that I now could sit	III	138
Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,	III	154
Ah, how sweet it is to love!	III	140
Ah what avails the sceptred race,	VI	119
A king lived long ago,	II	9
All along the valley, stream that flashest white,	III	321
All in the Downs the fleet was moored,	I	32
All that I know	III	58
All thoughts, all passions, all delights,	I	44
Although I enter not,	III	171
And are ye sure the news is true?	I	34
Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,	V	93
And wilt thou leave me thus?	III	81
Arethusa arose	II	140
"Are you ready for your steeple-chase,	II	306
Art thou poor; yet hast thou golden slumbers?	III	223
As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,	IV	244
As a twig trembles, which a bird	VI	134
A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew,	II	54
—A simple Child,	I	278
As it fell upon a day,	III	16
As I was walking all alane,	I	271
Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;	III	180

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Ask me no more where Jove bestows, ...	III	134
Ask me why I send you here	III	124
Ask not my name, O friend!	VI	48
As on my bed at dawn I mus'd and pray'd, . .	IV	248
A Sonnet is a moment's monument,— . . .	IV	176
As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay	III	317
As slow our ship her foamy track	III	232
A spirit haunts the year's last hours	III	54
A sweet disorder in the dress	III	125
At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay, ...	I	248
At midnight, in his guarded tent, ...	II	187
At Paris it was, at the opera there;— . . .	II	224
At the mid hour of night, when stars are weep- ing, I fly	III	304
At the midnight in the silence of the sleep- time, ...	VI	143
Avenge, O Lord! thy slaughter'd Saints, whose bones	IV	203
Awake, Æolian lyre, awake, ...	IV	76
Awake, awake, my Lyre!	IV	59
A wanderer is man from his birth.	V	275
Away, haunt thou not me, ...	V	272
"A weary lot is thine, fair maid, ...	I	40
A wet sheet and a flowing sea, ...	III	73
A wind came up out of the sea, ...	III	49
Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!	III	217
Bards of Passion and of Mirth, ...	IV	135
Beauty sat bathing by a spring, ...	III	88
Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!	VI	121
Because I breathe not love to every one, . . .	IV	180
Before I sigh my last gasp, let me breathe, . .	VI	156
Behold her, single in the field, ...	V	160
Being your slave, what should I do but tend . .	IV	187
Believe me, if all those endearing young charms, .	III	157
Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed . . .	V	106
Between the sunken sun and the new moon, . .	IV	265
Bid me to live, and I will live	III	126
Birds are singing round my window, ...	IV	281
<i>Blessings</i> on thee, little man, ...	V	169

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy, . . .	IV	53
Blow, blow, thou winter wind, ...	III	256
Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are flying—	III	70
Bonny Kilmeny gaed up the glen;	II	151
Boot, saddle, to horse and away!	III	207
Brave infant of Saguntum, clear	IV	37
Break, break, break, ...	III	320
Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—	IV	227
“ Build me straight, O worthy Master!	II	89
Burly, dozing humblebee!	III	64
Bury the Great Duke	IV	151
By the rude bridge that arched the flood, . . .	III	218
By what word's power, the key of paths untrod,	IV	257
Call for the robin-redbreast and the wren, . .	VI	39
Call me no more, ...	VI	41
Calme was the day, and through the trembling ayre	IV	13
Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in arms, . . .	IV	200
Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night, .	IV	181
Christmas is here:	III	252
Coldly, sadly descends	VI	97
Come away, come away, death, ...	III	96
Come, dear children, let us away;	II	291
Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:	V	79
Comfort thee, O thou mourner, yet awhile! . .	VI	76
Come hither, Evan Cameron!	I	296
Come into the garden, Maud, ...	III	182
Come, listen to me, you gallants so free, . .	I	91
Come live with me and be my Love, ...	III	97
Come, see the Dolphin's anchor forged; 't is at a white heat now:	V	82
Come, Sleep; O Sleep! the certain knot of peace,	IV	179
Come to me in my dreams, and then	III	188
Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn:	V	223
Could ye come back to me Douglas, Douglas, .	III	310
“ Courage! ” he said, and pointed toward the land, ...	V	135

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Crabbed Age and Youth	III	94
Creep into thy narrow bed, ...	VI	43
Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud, ...	IV	201
Cupid and my Campaspe played	III	86
Cyriack, this three years' day, these eyes, though clear, ...	IV	204
Cyriack, whose Grandsire on the Royal Bench	IV	201
Dark as the clouds of even, ...	I	233
Daughter of Jove, relentless power, ...	IV	70
Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days, . . .	IV	279
Dead! one of them shot by the sea in the east,	II	297
Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way, ...	V	116
Dear love, for nothing less than thee	III	137
Death, be not proud, though some have called thee	IV	195
Death stands above me, whispering low . . .	IV	277
Death, thou 'rt a cordial old and rare: . . .	IV	283
Does the road wind up-hill all the way? . .	III	322
Do ye hear the children weeping, O my bro- thers, ...	III	296
Dreaming a dream to prize, ...	III	228
Drink to me only with thine eyes, ...	III	90
Drop, drop, slow tears, ...	III	317
Drunk and senseless in his place, ...	II	285
Earth has not anything to show more fair: .	IV	211
E'en like two little bank-dividing brooks, .	VI	155
Eternal spirit of the chainless mind! . . .	IV	222
Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky! . .	III	40
<i>Even in a palace, life may be led well!</i> . .	IV	255
Ever let the Fancy roam, ...	IV	143
Faintly as tolls the evening chime	III	233
Fair Daffodils, we weep to see	III	34
Fair Flower, that dost so comely grow, . . .	V	113
Fair pledges of a fruitful tree, ...	III	33
Fair stood the wind for France	I	202
Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing, .	IV	190
Father of all! in every age, ...	VI	166
<i>Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat, .</i>	VI	145

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Fear no more the heat o' the sun, ...	VI	37
First time he kissed me, he but only kissed . . .	IV	237
Five years have past; five summers, with the length	V	47
Flower in the crannied wall, ...	IV	280
Fly envious Time, till thou run out thy race, . .	IV	52
"Fly to the desert, fly with me, ...	III	155
Follow your saint, follow with accents sweet! . .	III	103
Forget not yet the tried intent	III	82
Fresh Spring, the herald of loves mighty king, .	IV	178
From harmony, from heavenly harmony, . . .	IV	61
From Stirling castle we had seen	V	53
From the Desert I come to thee, ...	III	174
From the forests and highlands	III	44
From you have I been absent in the spring, . .	IV	191
Full fathom five thy father lies:	VI	38
Full many a glorious morning have I seen . . .	IV	186
Gamarra is a noble steed, ...	III	74
Garlands upon his grave, ...	VI	111
Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, ...	III	125
Get up, get up for shame! The blooming morn . .	III	30
Give me my scallop-shell of quiet, ...	III	314
Give pardon, blessèd soul, to my bold cries, . .	IV	181
Give place, you ladies, and begone!	III	79
"Give us a song!" the soldiers cried, ...	II	288
Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven	V	55
Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song, .	III	321
Go fetch to me a pint o' wine, ...	III	199
Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand . . .	IV	233
Go, lovely Rose—	III	136
God made my lady lovely to behold;	IV	266
God makes sech nights, all white an' still . . .	II	230
God sends his teachers unto every age, ...	II	127
Goethe in Weimar sleeps, and Greece	VI	77
Good-by, proud world! I'm going home: . . .	III	228
Great men have been among us; hands that penned	IV	208
Green be the turf above thee, ...	VI	104
Grow old along with me!	V	191

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove!	III	37
Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances! . .	III	203
Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!	IV	124
Half a league, half a league, ...	I	243
Hame, hame, hame, O hame fain wad I be— .	III	309
Hamelin Town 's in Brunswick, ...	II	163
Happy those early days, when I	VI	161
Hark! ah, the nightingale—	III	56
Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings, . .	III	97
Hark! Now everything is still, ...	VI	38
Harp of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark, ...	III	286
Hast thou named all the birds without a gun? .	IV	278
Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss-shay, .	II	236
Hear the sledges with the bells—	III	234
Heart, we will forget him!	IV	282
Hear, ye ladies that despise	III	132
He first deceased; she for a little tried . . .	VI	47
He is gone on the mountain, ...	VI	33
Helen, thy beauty is to me	III	176
Hence, all you vain delights, ...	III	278
Hence, loathed Melancholy, ...	V	9
Hence, vain deluding Joys, ...	V	14
Here, ever since you went abroad, ...	IV	276
Here is the place; right over the hill	II	308
Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee, ...	III	128
Her fingers shame the ivory keys	I	53
Her house is all of echo made	IV	271
Her mother died when she was young, . . .	I	70
Her suffering ended with the day, ...	VI	136
He saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save.	IV	256
He that loves a rosy cheek, ...	III	133
Hey! now the day dawis;	III	11
Hie upon Hiellands and low upon Tay, . . .	I	264
High grace, the dower of queens; and there- withal	IV	260
"Hind Horn fair, and Hind Horn free, . . .	I	25
His golden locks Time hath to silver turn'd; .	III	197
Ho, pretty page, with the dimpled chin, . . .	III	255
How beautiful is the rain!	V	96

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!	VI	86
How delicious is the winning	III	165
How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. . .	IV	239
How happy is he born and taught	V	258
How like a Winter hath my absence been . .	IV	191
How many Summers, love, ...	III	242
How many times do I love thee, dear? . . .	III	158
How near to good is what is fair!	IV	271
How peacefully the broad and golden moon . .	IV	249
How seldom, friend! a good great man inherits	IV	274
How sleep the brave who sink to rest, ...	VI	34
How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,	IV	198
How vainly men themselves amaze, ...	V	20
Hues of the rich unfolding morn, ...	VI	173
I am dying, Egypt, dying!	V	238
I am monarch of all I survey, ...	V	221
I arise from dreams of thee	III	159
I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,	V	90
I cannot eat but little meat	III	258
I come from haunts of coot and hern, ...	V	99
I'd a dream to-night	VI	139
I do not count the hours I spend	V	39
I do not own an inch of land, ...	V	42
If all the world and love were young, ...	III	98
If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song, . .	IV	85
I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden;	III	161
I fill this cup to one made up	III	178
If doughty deeds my lady please, ...	III	153
If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange .	IV	237
If the red slayer think he slays, ...	V	271
If there were dreams to sell, ...	III	227
If thou must love me, let it be for nought. .	IV	234
If thou shouldst ever come by choice or chance	II	215
If thou wilt ease thine heart	VI	42
If to be absent were to be	III	129
If to grow old in Heaven is to grow young, .	IV	263
I got me flowers to straw thy way.	VI	152
I had a dream, which was not all a dream. .	VI	152
I have a life with Christ to live, ...	VI	186

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
I have had playmates, I have had companions, . .	VI	73
I have read, in some old, marvellous tale, . .	V	249
I heard men saying, Leave hope and praying, . .	III	290
I heard the trailing garments of the Night . .	III	46
I hung my verses in the wind, ...	IV	279
I know a little garden close	III	173
I know a thing that 's most uncommon; . . .	IV	272
I know not that the men of old	V	133
I know that all beneath the moon decays, . .	IV	196
I like a church; I like a cowl;	V	268
I loved him not; and yet, now he is gone, . .	VI	119
I met a traveller from an antique land . . .	IV	222
I mourn no more my vanished years:	VI	189
I 'm sittin' on the stile, Mary, ...	VI	128
I 'm wearin' awa', John, ...	III	311
In a drear-nighted December, ...	III	268
I never gave a lock of hair away	IV	235
In London city was Beichan born	I	17
In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes, .	V	115
In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain .	V	25
In the hour of my distress, ...	VI	158
In their ragged regimentals, ...	I	230
In the merry month of May, ...	III	106
Into the Devil tavern	I	241
Into the woods my Master went, ...	III	316
In yonder grave a Druid lies, ...	VI	59
In Xanadu did Kubla Khan	V	80
I played a soft and doleful air, ...	I	45
I remember, I remember, ...	III	269
I saw a Sower walking slow	V	144
I saw Eternity the other night, ...	V	245
I saw him once before, ...	V	167
I saw my Lady weep, ...	III	99
I saw old Autumn in the misty morn	IV	148
I see the wealthy miller yet, ...	II	31
I shot an arrow into the air, ...	III	283
Is it indeed so? If I lay here dead, ...	IV	236
I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he; . .	I	130
I stood on the bridge at midnight, ...	III	279

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
I strove with none; for none was worth my		
strife, ...	IV	278
It fell about the Lammas tide, ...	I	197
It fortifies my soul to know	IV	280
I thank all who have loved me in their hearts, .	IV	238
I think it is over, over, ...	VI	142
I thought once how Theocritus had sung . .	IV	232
It is a beauteous evening, calm and free, . .	IV	212
It is an ancient Mariner, ...	I	151
It is not to be thought of that the flood . . .	IV	209
It is time to be old, ...	V	267
It keeps eternal whisperings around	IV	225
It little profits that an idle king, ...	V	175
It was a dismal and a fearful night, ...	VI	80
It was a' for our rightfu' king	III	200
It was a summer evening, ...	I	218
It was her first sweet child, her heart's delight:	IV	247
It was many and many a year ago, ...	I	56
It was not in the winter	III	167
It was roses, roses, all the way, ...	II	290
It was the calm and silent night!	VI	178
It was the schooner Hesperus, ...	I	182
It was the winter wild	IV	43
I've heard them liltng at our ewe-milking .	I	277
I wander'd by the brook-side, ...	III	177
I wander'd lonely as a cloud	III	41
I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile! .	V	44
I will not have the mad Clytie, ...	III	53
I wish I were where Helen lies!	I	259
I wish that when you died last May, ...	VI	123
I wonder do you feel to-day	V	187
I wonder not that Youth remains	IV	277
I worship Thee, sweet Will of God!	VI	181
I would not have this perfect love of ours .	IV	251
Jenny kissed me when we met, ...	III	158
Jesu, Lover of my soul, ...	VI	170
John Anderson my jo, John, ...	III	245
John Gilpin was a citizen	II	241
Just for a handful of silver he left us, . . .	III	289

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King, ...	III	205
King Charles, and who 'll do him right now? . .	III	206
<i>Last night</i> , among his fellow roughs, ...	II	284
Late at een, drinkin' the wine, ...	I	272
Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,	III	323
Let folly praise that fancy loves, I praise and love that Child	VI	149
Let me not to the marriage of true minds . .	IV	194
Let 's contend no more, Love, ...	V	189
Life and Thought have gone away	VI	23
Life! I know not what thou art, ...	V	260
Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore, ...	IV	187
Like souls that balance joy and pain, ...	I	51
Like to the clear in highest sphere	III	84
Little Ellie sits alone	I	97
Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown,	V	262
Live thy Life, ...	V	41
Long I followed happy guides, ...	V	265
Look how the lark soars upward and is gone, .	IV	230
Look in my face; my name is Might-have- been;	IV	264
Lord, it belongs not to my care, ...	VI	164
Lord, what unvalued pleasures crown'd . . .	VI	163
Love, dearest Lady, such as I would speak, .	IV	231
Love in fantastic triumph sate, ...	III	141
Love in my bosom like a bee	III	83
Love is a sickness full of woes, ...	III	108
Love is the blossom where there blows . . .	III	101
Love me not for comely grace, ...	III	105
Love me, Sweet, with all thou art, ...	III	192
Many a green isle needs must be	V	61
Mary! I want a lyre with other strings, . .	IV	205
Maud Muller, on a summer's day, ...	II	219
Merry Margaret, ...	III	108
Methought I saw my late espoused Saint .	IV	205
Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour!	IV	207
Mine be a cot beside the hill;	III	224
Morning, evening, noon and night, ...	II	133
<i>Mortality</i> , behold and fear!	VI	45

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Most glorious Lord of Life! that, on this day,	IV	177
Mother, I cannot mind my wheel;	III	273
Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold, .	IV	223
Music, when soft voices die, ...	III	162
My days among the Dead are past;	V	261
My dear and only love, I pray.	III	144
My good blade carves the casques of men, . .	V	184
My hair is gray, but not with years, ...	II	191
My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains	IV	132
My heart leaps up when I behold	IV	274
My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;	III	36
My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes	VI	140
My Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst die:	IV	252
My Love in her attire doth show her wit, . .	III	104
My loved, my honored, much-respected friend, .	II	40
My lute, be as thou wast when thou didst grow .	IV	198
My silks and fine array, ...	III	145
My soul, sit thou a patient looker-on;	IV	271
My soul, there is a country	VI	160
My spirit is too weak—mortality	IV	225
Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew	IV	221
My true love hath my heart, and I have his, . .	III	87
Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands	V	253
No longer mourn for me when I am dead . .	IV	188
Noon—and the north-west sweeps the empty road, ...	V	102
No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,—	I	179
Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note, . .	VI	31
No! those days are gone away, ...	V	146
Not I myself know all my love for thee: . .	IV	261
Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are!	I	220
Now the lusty spring is seen;	III	29
Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;	IV	175
O blithe New-comer! I have heard, ...	III	38
O, Brignall banks are wild and fair, ...	I	41
O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;	VI	105
O Death! thou tyrant fell and bloody!	VI	61

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Of all the girls that are so smart	III	142
Of all the thoughts of God that are	VI	21
Of a' the airts the wind can blaw, ...	III	151
Of Nelson and the North, ...	I	215
O Friend I know not which way I must look .	IV	206
O friends! with whom my feet have trod . .	VI	192
Often I think of the beautiful town	III	263
Oft have I seen at some cathedral door . . .	IV	240
Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:	I	281
Oft, in the stilly night, ...	III	271
O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung	IV	139
O have ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde? . .	I	105
Oh, England is a pleasant place for them that 's rich and high	V	240
Oh sing unto my roundelay!	VI	40
Oh! snatched away in beauty's bloom, . . .	VI	113
Oh, that last day in Lucknow fort!	II	184
Oh! that we two were Maying	III	175
Oh, to be in England	III	57
Oh Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls .	IV	115
Oh! young Lochinvar is come out of the west.	I	36
O land of Promise! from what Pisgah's height	IV	164
Old wine to drink!	III	259
O Liberty! with profitless endeavour	IV	103
O, lovers' eyes are sharp to see, ...	I	39
O love, this morn when the sweet nightingale	V	104
O love, turn from the unchanging sea, and gaze	V	105
O Mary, at thy window be!	III	147
"O Mary, go and call the cattle home, . . .	I	287
O may I join the choir invisible	VI	185
O Mistress mine, where are you roaming? . .	III	92
O my Dark Rosaleen, ...	III	210
O my Luve 's like a red, red rose	III	149
On a day, alack the day!	III	95
Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee; .	IV	213
Once more the Heavenly Power	V	94
Once only by the garden gate	III	231
Once this soft turf, this rivulet's sands, . .	VI	26
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pon- dered, weak and weary, ...	I	311

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
On either side the river lie	I	73
One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee, . . .	IV	253
One more Unfortunate, ...	VI	124
O never say that I was false of heart, . . .	IV	193
One word is too often profaned	III	161
O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray . .	IV	199
On Linden, when the sun was low, ...	I	214
On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen-hundred ninety-two, ...	I	188
O Rose, who dares to name thee?	III	191
O, saw ye bonnie Lesley, ...	III	148
O saw ye not fair Ines?	III	168
O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light, .	III	213
O tenderly the haughty day	IV	167
O that 't were possible	III	185
Others abide our question. Thou art free . .	IV	254
O thou that sendest out the man	III	209
O thou that swing'st upon the waving hair . .	III	30
Our band is few but true and tried, ...	I	225
Our bugles sang truce,—for the night-cloud had lowered, ...	I	212
Our doctor had called in another, I never had seen him before, ...	II	310
Our share of night to bear, ...	IV	282
Out of a fired ship, which by no way	IV	272
Out of the cradle endlessly rocking, ...	V	120
Out upon it, I have loved	III	122
Over hill, over dale, ...	III	19
Over his keys the musing organist, ...	II	107
Over the mountains	III	114
"O waly, waly, my gay goshawk, ...	I	11
O waly, waly, up the bank, ...	I	28
O, well for him whose will is strong!	V	259
O what can all thee, knight-at-arms, ...	I	85
"O where ha'e ye been, Lord Randal, my son? .	I	264
O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, ...	IV	129
O world! O life! O time!	III	266
O young Mariner, ...	II	122
Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day, ...	III	107

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Phœbus, arise!	III	24
Pibroch of Donald Dhu, ...	III	201
Pilgrims, whose wandering feet have pressed .	VI	73
Piping down the valleys wild, ...	III	246
Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth . .	IV	195
Pray but one prayer for me 'twixt thy closed lips, ...	III	172
Proud Maisie is in the wood, ...	I	284
Proud word you never spoke, but you will speak	IV	276
Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control .	VI	184
Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair, . . .	III	14
Quiet, Lord, my froward heart:	VI	170
Rabbi Jehosha used to say	V	282
Rarely, rarely, comest thou, ...	III	225
Renowned Spenser lie a thought more nigh .	VI	45
" Rise up, rise up, now, Lord Douglas," she says,	I	268
Round the cape of a sudden came the sea, . .	III	190
Sabrina fair, ...	III	26
Said Abner, " At last thou art come! Ere I tell ere thou speak, ...	V	199
Saint Brandan sails the northern main; . . .	II	137
Say not the struggle nought availeth, . . .	V	272
Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frown'd	IV	175
Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled, ...	III	198
Seamen three! What men be ye?	III	257
Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, . .	IV	142
See, from this counterfeit of him	V	152
See the Chariot at hand here of Love, . . .	III	89
Set where the upper streams of Simois flow .	V	278
Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day? . .	IV	184
Shall I tell you whom I love?	III	112
Shall I, wasting in despair, ...	III	110
She died in June, while yet the woodbine sprays	IV	246
She fell asleep on Christmas Eve:	VI	137
She is not fair to outward view	III	166
She loves him; for her infinite soul is Love, .	IV	263
She sat and wept beside his feet; the weight .	IV	229
She stood breast high amid the corn	V	157
She walks in beauty, like the night	III	164
She was a Phantom of delight	V	159

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Should auld acquaintance be forgot, ...	III	261
Shut not so soon; the dull-eyed night . . .	III	127
Silence augmenteth grief, writing increaseth rage, ...	VI	49
Since all that I can ever do for thee	IV	283
Since there 's no help, come let us kiss and part,—	IV	182
Sit down, sad soul, and count	III	303
Slayer of the winter, art thou here again? .	V	103
Sleep sweetly in your humble graves, . . .	VI	34
So all day long the noise of battle roll'd .	II	204
So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn . .	V	154
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er, ...	III	277
Sometimes thou seem'st not as thyself alone, .	IV	260
Southward with fleet of ice	I	186
"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!	I	124
Spirit that breathest through my lattice, thou	III	50
Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;	III	15
St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was! . .	II	68
Star that bringest home the bee, ...	III	47
Steer, hither steer your wingèd pines, . . .	III	23
Stern Daughter of the voice of God! . . .	IV	96
Still to be neat, still to be drest, ...	III	91
Strange fits of passion have I known: . . .	VI	114
Strew on her roses, roses, ...	VI	120
Strong Son of God, immortal Love, ...	VI	24
Summer is icumen in, ...	III	11
"Summer is coming, summer is coming. . .	III	55
Sunset and evening star, ...	III	324
Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind . .	IV	217
Sweet and low, sweet and low, ...	III	249
Sweet, be not proud of those two eyes . . .	III	123
Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright! . . .	VI	154
Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph that liv'st unseen	III	25
Sweet in her green dell the flower of beauty slumbers, ...	III	170
Sweet twining hedgesflowers wind-stirred in no wise	IV	258
Swiftly walk over the western wave, . . .	III	43

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Take, O take those lips away, ...	III	93
Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense, .	IV	219
Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean, .	III	272
Teach me my God and King, ...	VI	150
Tell me not, in mournful numbers, ...	V	247
Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind, ...	III	198
Tell me where is fancy bred, ...	III	93
Thank Heaven! the crisis—	III	305
Thanks to the morning light, ...	III	59
That time of year thou may'st in me behold .	IV	189
That which her slender waist confined . . .	III	132
The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, ...	II	183
The awful shadow of some unseen Power . .	IV	121
The blessed Damozel lean'd out	I	58
The breaking waves dashed high	I	177
The charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!	I	245
The curfew tolls the knell of parting day, . .	VI	12
The day is done, and the darkness	III	240
The door of death is made of gold, ...	VI	172
The expense of Spirit is a waste of shame . .	IV	194
The forward youth that would appear . . .	IV	54
The Fountains mingle with the River . . .	III	160
The Frost performs its secret ministry, . . .	V	22
The glories of our blood and state	VI	9
The gray sea and the long black land; . . .	III	189
The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned	V	34
The harp that once through Tara's halls . .	III	288
The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece! . .	V	75
The Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair! . .	II	173
The king sits in Dunfermline town	I	145
The Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor	I	134
The Lady Mary Villiers lies	VI	48
The Laird o' Cockpen he's proud an' he's great, .	II	251
The lark now leaves his wat'ry nest, ...	III	131
The last and greatest herald of Heaven's King, .	IV	197
<i>The linnet in the rocky dells, ...</i>	III	319

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year, ...	V	118
The midges dance aboon the burn;	III	52
The muffled drum's sad roll has beat . . .	VI	28
The night is come, but not too soon; . . .	III	48
The night that has no star lit up by God, .	IV	250
The old mayor climbed the belfry tower, . .	I	289
The Percy out of Northumberland, ...	I	113
The play is done; the curtain drops, . . .	V	283
The poetry of earth is never dead:	IV	224
There are gains for all losses, ...	III	267
There be none of Beauty's daughters . . .	III	162
There is a city, builded by no hand, ...	VI	192
There is a flower I wish to wear, ...	IV	275
There is a Flower, the lesser Celandine, . .	V	112
There is a garden in her face	III	103
There is a mountain and a wood between us, .	IV	277
There is an awful quiet in the air, ...	IV	228
There is delight in singing, tho' none hear .	V	151
There is no flock, however watched and tended,	VI	131
There lived a wife at Usher's Well, ...	I	266
There 's a palace in Florence, the world knows well, ...	II	273
There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs .	V	156
There was a roaring in the wind all night; . .	II	48
There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream, ...	IV	89
There was a youth, and a well-beloved youth,	I	22
There were four of us about that bed; . . .	I	303
The royal feast was done! the King	II	263
The sea is calm to-night.	V	279
The sea! the sea! the open sea!	III	72
The skies they were ashen and sober; . . .	II	302
The sky is a drinking-cup	IV	281
The snow had begun in the gloaming, . . .	VI	135
The soul of man is larger than the sky, . .	IV	227
The spacious firmament on high, ...	VI	165
The splendor falls on castle walls	III	181
The sun is warm, the sky is clear, ...	V	73
The twentieth year is well-nigh past, . . .	III	243

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
The world is too much with us; late and soon,	IV	214
The world's great age begins anew, ...	III	284
They are all gone into the world of light! . .	VI	10
The year 's at the spring	III	59
" They made her grave too cold and damp . .	II	83
They pass me like shadows, crowds on crowds,	IV	251
They that have power to hurt and will do none,	IV	190
This æ nighte, this æ nighte, ...	VI	35
This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:— .	II	106
This is a spray the Bird clung to, ...	III	190
This is the month, and this is the happy morn	IV	42
This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign, .	V	108
This morning is the morning of the day, . .	II	17
Those who have laid the harp aside	V	148
Thou blossom bright with autumn dew, . . .	V	114
Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray, . . .	III	270
Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness, . .	IV	137
Three fishers went sailing away to the west,—	I	288
Three poets in three distant ages born, . . .	IV	272
Throw away Thy rod, ...	VI	151
Thy braes were bonny, Yarrow stream, . . .	I	275
Thy way, not mine, O Lord, ...	VI	182
Tiger, tiger, burning bright	III	42
Time was, I shrank from what was right . . .	VI	183
'T is done—but yesterday a King!	IV	109
'T is gone, that bright and orb'd blaze, . . .	VI	175
'T is time this heart should be unmoved, . .	III	275
To be a sweetness more desired than Spring; .	IV	262
To fair Fidele's grassy tomb	VI	112
To him who, in the love of Nature, holds . .	VI	18
Toll for the brave!	I	149
To me, fair friend, you never can be old; . .	IV	192
Too frail to keep the lofty vow	VI	65
To the Lords of Convention 't was Claver'se who spoke, ...	I	209
To the Ocean now I fly, ...	III	27
Touch us gently, Time!	III	252
True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;	I	67
Tuscan, that wanderest through the realms of <i>gloom</i> , ...	IV	239

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
'T was at the royal feast, for Persia won . . .	IV	63
'T was in the prime of summer time, . . .	II	265
'Twixt gleams of joy and clouds of doubt . . .	VI	187
Two Voices are there; one is of the sea, . . .	IV	216
Under a spreading chestnut-tree	V	165
Underneath this sable hearse	VI	46
Under the greenwood tree	III	21
Under the wide and starry sky, ...	VI	142
Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart! . . .	IV	233
Up from the meadows rich with corn, . . .	I	236
Up into the cherry-tree	III	248
Up the airy mountain, ...	I	83
Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith, . . .	IV	265
Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying, . . .	V	264
Vital spark of heav'nly flame!	VI	169
Wae worth the power, thou cursed leaf! . .	IV	273
Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—	I	305
Waken, lords and ladies gay, ...	III	230
Weary of myself, and sick of asking	V	273
Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flower, ...	V	109
Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee; .	III	247
Weep you no more, sad fountains;	III	100
Welcome, maids of honour!	III	35
Welcome, welcome! do I sing, ...	III	111
Well! If the Bard was weather-wise who made	IV	103
Were I as base as is the lonely plain, . . .	IV	183
We watch'd her breathing thro' the night, . .	VI	131
We were not many, we who stood	I	232
What bird so sings, yet so does wail? . . .	III	15
What constitutes a State?	IV	88
What is House and what is Home, ...	V	256
What is it to grow old?	V	281
What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones, ...	VI	44
What poets feel not, when they make	IV	281
What rumour'd heavens are these	IV	169
What was he doing, the great god Pan, . . .	III	282
"What, you are stepping westward?" . . .	IV	158
When as in silks my Julia goes, ...	III	124

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
When Britain first, at Heaven's command, . . .	III	208
When chapman billies leave the street, . . .	II	253
When daisies pied and violets blue, . . .	III	18
When descends on the Atlantic	V	88
When do I see thee most, beloved one? . .	IV	257
When Freedom from her mountain height . .	III	215
When God at first made Man, ...	VI	153
When icicles hang by the wall, ...	III	22
When I consider how my light is spent, . .	IV	202
When I do count the clock that tells the time,	IV	184
When I have borne in memory what has tamed	IV	210
When I have fears that I may cease to be .	IV	226
When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced	IV	188
When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,	IV	185
When in the chronicle of wasted time . . .	IV	192
When Letty had scarce pass'd her third glad year, ...	IV	245
When lovely woman stoops to folly	IV	273
When Love with unconfined wings	III	130
When maidens such as Hester die, ...	VI	75
When Music, heavenly maid, was young, . .	IV	81
When our two souls stand up erect and strong, .	IV	235
When Robin Hood and Little John	I	260
When shales been sheen, and shradds full fair,	I	95
When the British warrior queen, ...	I	207
When the lamp is shattered	III	274
When the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye's come hame, ...	I	30
When thou must home to shades of under- ground, ...	III	105
When thou, poor Excommunicate	III	135
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought .	IV	186
When we two parted	III	163
Where are the swallows fled?	III	312
Where the bee sucks, there suck I:	III	20
Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles	II	28
Where the remote Bermudas ride, ...	VI	162
Whether on Ida's shady brow, ...	III	287
Which I wish to remark—	II	234
Whither, midst falling dew, ...	IV	147

Index of First Lines

	VOL.	PAGE
Whoe'er she be—	III	117
Who is Silvia? What is she, ...	III	91
Why art thou silent! Is thy love a plant.	IV	218
Why so pale and wan, fond lover?	III	122
Wild rose of Alloway! my thanks;	VI	67
Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!	V	251
With blackest moss the flower-plots	V	162
With deep affection	III	238
With farmer Allan at the farm abode	II	11
With fingers weary and worn, ...	III	292
With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st	IV	178
"With sacrifice before the rising morn	II	143
Wondrous and awful are thy silent halls, ...	IV	161
Wouldst thou hear what Man can say	VI	47
Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build, ...	V	177
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night	III	250
Ye banks and braes and streams around	III	152
Ye blushing virgins happy are	III	116
Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause, ...	IV	99
Ye distant spires, ye antique towers, ...	IV	72
Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon, ...	III	146
Ye have been fresh and green, ...	III	35
Ye Highlands and ye Lawlands, ...	I	21
Ye learnèd sisters, which have oftentimes	IV	20
Ye Mariners of England!	I	176
Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more	VI	52
You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:	I	239
You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier, ...	VI	107
You meaner beauties of the night, ...	III	135
Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—	IV	259
You shall not be overbold	III	66

AUTHOR'S INDEX

ADDISON	VOL.	PAGE
The Voice of the Heavens	VI	165
ALDRICH		
A Death-Bed	VI	136
ALLINGHAM		
The Fairies	I	83
ANONYMOUS		
A Lyke-Wake Dirge	VI	35
Bonnie George Campbell	I	264
Chevy Chase	I	113
Cuckoo Song	III	11
Fair Helen of Kirconnell	I	259
Hind Horn	I	25
Kemp Owyne	I	70
Kinmont Willie	I	105
Lord Randal	I	264
Love Not Me for Comely Grace	III	105
Madrigal	III	104
My Lady's Tears	III	99
Over the Mountains	III	114
Robin Hood and Allen-a-Dale	I	91
Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne	I	95
Robin Hood's Death	I	260
Sir Patrick Spens	I	145
The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington	I	22
The Battle of Otterburn	I	197
The Bonny Earl of Murray	I	21
The Braes of Yarrow	I	272
The Douglas Tragedy	I	268
<i>The Gay Goshawk</i>	I	11

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
The Invitation	VI	163
The Twa Corbies	I	271
The Wife of Usher's Well	I	266
Thomas the Rhymer	I	67
Waly, Waly up the Bank	I	28
Weep You No More, Sad Fountains	III	100
Young Beichan	I	17
ARNOLD		
A Caution to Poets	IV	281
A Nameless Epitaph	VI	48
Dover Beach	V	279
Growing Old	V	281
Longing	III	188
Memorial Verses	VI	77
Palladium	V	278
Philomela	III	56
Quiet Work	IV	253
Requiescat	VI	120
Rugby Chapel	VI	97
Saint Brandon	II	137
Self-Dependence	V	273
Shakespeare	IV	254
Sonnets	IV	253
The Forsaken Merman	II	291
The Future	V	275
The Good Shepherd with the Kid	IV	256
The Last Word	VI	43
Thyrsis	VI	86
Worldly Place	IV	255
AYTOUN		
The Execution of Montrose	I	296
BARBAULD		
Life	V	260
BARHAM		
The Jackdaw of Rheims	II	173
BARNES		
The Mother's Dream	VI	139
BARNFIELD		
To the Nightingale	III	16

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
BASSE		
Elegy on Shakespeare	VI	45
BAXTER		
A Hymn of Trust	VI	164
BEAUMONT		
Home	V	256
On the Tombs in Westminster	VI	45
BEDDOES		
Dream-Pedlary	III	227
"How Many Times do I Love Thee, Dear?"	III	158
Wolfram's Dirge	VI	42
BEHN		
Song	III	141
BLAKE		
Piping Down the Valleys	III	246
Song	III	145
The Golden Door	VI	172
The Tiger	III	42
To the Muses	III	287
BOKER		
The Black Regiment	I	233
BONAR		
God's Way	VI	182
BRETON		
Phillida and Corydon	III	106
BRONTE		
My Lady's Grave	III	319
BROWNE		
A Welcome	III	111
My Choice	III	112
The Siren's Song	III	23
BROWNING		
Abt Vogler	V	177
A King Lived Long Ago	II	9
A Woman's Last Word	V	189
Cavalier Tunes	III	205
Epilogue	VI	143
<i>Evelyn Hope</i>	VI	121

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
<i>From Pippa Passes</i>	III	59
Hervé Riel	I	188
Home-Thoughts, from Abroad	III	57
"How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix"	I	130
Incident of the French Camp	I	239
Love Among the Ruins	II	28
May and Death	VI	123
Meeting at Night	III	189
Memorabilia	V	151
Misconceptions	III	190
My Star	III	58
Parting at Morning	III	190
Prospice	VI	145
Rabbi Ben Ezra	V	191
Saul	V	199
The Boy and the Angel	II	133
The Lost Leader	III	289
The Patriot	II	290
The Pied Piper of Hamelin	II	163
The Statue and the Bust	II	273
Two in the Campagna	V	187
BROWNING, E. B.		
A Dead Rose	III	191
A Man's Requirements	III	192
A Musical Instrument	III	282
Mother and Poet	II	297
Sleep	VI	21
Sonnets from the Portuguese	IV	232
The Cry of the Children	III	296
The Romance of the Swan's Nest	I	79
BRYANT		
A Forest Hymn	V	34
Song of Marion's Men	I	225
Thanatopsis	VI	18
The Battle-Field	VI	26
The Death of the Flowers	V	118
The Evening Wind	III	50
To a Waterfowl	IV	147
To the Fringed Gentian	V	114

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
BURNS		
Ae Fond Kiss	III	150
A Farewell	III	199
Auld Lang Syne	III	261
Bannockburn	III	198
Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson . .	VI	61
Highland Mary	III	152
"It was a' for Our Rightfu' King" . . .	III	200
John Anderson, My Jo	III	245
Lines Written on a Bank-Note	IV	273
Mary Morison	III	147
My Heart's in the Highlands	III	36
O' a' the Airts	III	151
O My Luve's Like a Red, Red Rose . . .	III	149
O, Saw ye Bonnie Lesley?	III	148
Tam O'Shanter	II	253
The Banks of Doon	III	146
The Cotter's Saturday Night	II	40
Thou Lingerin' Star	III	270
To a Mountain Daisy	V	109
BYRON		
Darkness	II	102
Ode on Venice	IV	115
Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte	IV	109
Oh! Snatch'd Away in Beauty's Bloom . .	VI	113
On This Day I Complete My Thirty-sixth Year	III	275
She Walks in Beauty	III	164
Sonnet on Chillon	IV	222
Stanzas for Music	III	162
The Destruction of Sennacherib	II	183
The Isles of Greece	V	75
The Prisoner of Chillon	II	191
"When We Two Parted"	III	163
CAMPBELL		
Hohenlinden	I	214
How Delicious is the Winning	III	165
Lord Ullin's Daughter	I	285
The Battle of the Baltic	I	215
The Soldier's Dream	I	212

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
To the Evening Star	III	47
Ye Mariners of England	I	176
CAMPION		
Cherry-ripe	III	103
Follow Your Saint	III	103
Vobiscum est Iope	III	105
CAREW		
Disdain Returned	III	133
Epitaph on the Lady Mary Villiers	VI	48
Song	III	134
To his Inconstant Mistress	III	135
CAREY		
Sally in Our Alley	III	142
CHATTERTON		
Minstrel's Song	VI	40
CLOUGH		
In a Lecture-room	V	272
<i>Qua Cursum Ventus</i>	III	317
"Say not the Struggle Nought Availeth"	V	272
"With Whom is no Variableness, Neither Shadow of Turning"	IV	280
COLERIDGE		
Dejection: an Ode	IV	103
France: an Ode	IV	99
Frost at Midnight	V	22
Kubla Khan	V	80
Love	I	44
The Good Great Man	IV	274
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.	I	151
Youth and Age	V	264
COLERIDGE, H.		
"Multum Dilexit"	IV	229
Prayer	IV	228
Song	III	166
To Shakespeare	IV	227
COLLINS		
Dirge in Cymbeline	VI	112
Ode to Evening	IV	85

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Ode Written in 1745	VI	34
On the Death of Thomson	VI	59
The Passions	IV	81
CONSTABLE		
To Sir Philip Sidney's Soul	IV	181
CUNNINGHAM		
A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea	III	73
Hame, Hame, Hame	III	309
CUNNINGHAME-GRAHAM		
If Doughty Deeds	III	153
COWLEY		
A Supplication	IV	59
On the Death of Mr. William Hervey	VI	80
COWPER		
Boadicea	I	207
On the Loss of the Royal George	I	149
The Diverting History of John Gilpin	II	241
To Mary	III	243
To Mary Unwin	IV	205
Verses	V	221
CRAIK		
"Douglas, Douglas, Tender and True"	III	310
CRASHAW		
Wishes to His Supposed Mistress	III	117
DANIEL		
Delia xlix	IV	181
Love is a Sickness	III	108
DARLEY		
Song	III	170
DAVENANT		
"The Lark Now Leaves His Wat'ry Nest"	III	131
DEKKER		
The Happy Heart	III	223
DICKINSON		
"Heart, We Will Forget Him"	IV	282
"Our Share of Night to Bear"	IV	282
DOMETT		
A Christmas Hymn	VI	178

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
DONNE		
A Burnt Ship	IV	272
Death	IV	195
The Dream	III	137
The Will	VI	156
DOYLE		
The Private of the Buffs	II	284
DRAKE		
The American Flag	III	215
DRAYTON		
Agincourt	I	202
Idea lxi	IV	182
DRUMMOND		
For the Baptist	IV	197
"I Know That All Beneath the Moon De- cays"	IV	196
Invocation	III	24
To His Lute	IV	198
DRYDEN		
Ah, How Sweet it is to Love!	III	140
Alexander's Feast; or, the Power of Music	IV	63
A Song for St. Cecilia's Day	IV	61
On Milton	IV	272
DUFFERIN		
Lament of the Irish Emigrant	VI	128
ELIOT		
"O May I Join the Choir Invisible!"	VI	185
ELLIOT		
A Lament for Flodden	I	277
EMERSON		
Brahma	V	271
Concord Hymn	III	218
Days	IV	279
Each and All	V	262
Forbearance	IV	278
Good-by	III	228
Ode	IV	157
Terminus	V	257

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
The Forerunners	V	265
The Problem	V	268
The Rhodora	V	115
The Snow-Storm	V	93
The Test	IV	279
The Titmouse	III	66
The World-Soul	III	59
To the Humblebee	III	64
Waldeinsamkeit	V	39
FABER		
The Will of God	VI	181
FERGUSON		
The Forging of the Anchor	V	82
FIELD		
Dutch Lullaby	III	250
FLETCHER		
A Hymn	III	317
Hear, ye Ladies	III	132
Love's Emblems	III	29
Melancholy	III	278
Wooing Song	III	101
FRENEAU		
The Wild Honeysuckle	V	113
GAY		
Black-eyed Susan	I	32
GOLDSMITH		
When Lovely Woman Stoops to Folly	IV	273
GRAHAM		
My Dear and Only Love, I Pray	III	144
GRAY		
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard .	VI	12
Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College .	IV	72
Ode to Adversity	IV	70
The Progress of Poesy	IV	76
GREENE		
Sephestia's Lullaby	III	247
GREVILLE		
On Sir Philip Sidney	VI	49

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
HABINGTON		
To Roses in the Bosom of Castara	III	116
HALLECK		
Burns	VI	67
Joseph Rodman Drake	VI	104
Marco Bozzaris	II	187
HARTE		
Plain Language from Truthful James . . .	II	234
Ramon	II	285
HAYNE		
"Between the Sunken Sun and the New Moon"	IV	265
In Harbor	VI	142
HEMANS		
The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England	I	177
HERBERT		
Discipline	VI	151
Easter	VI	152
The Elixir	VI	150
The Pulley	VI	153
Virtue	VI	154
HEYWOOD		
A Praise of His Lady	III	79
Pack, Clouds, Away	III	107
HERRICK		
Corinna's Going a-Maying	III	30
Delight in Disorder	III	125
Lacrimæ	VI	41
Litany to the Holy Spirit	VI	158
The Night-piece, to Julia	III	128
The Primrose	III	124
To Anthea; Who May Command Him Any- thing	III	126
To Blossoms	III	33
To Daffodils	III	34
To Daisies, Not to Shut so Soon	III	127
To Dianeme	III	122

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
To Meadows	III	35
To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time . .	III	125
To Violets	III	35
Upon Julia's Clothes	III	124
HOFFMAN		
Monterey	I	232
HOGG		
Kilmeny	II	151
HOLMES		
Old Ironsides	III	217
The Chambered Nautilus	V	108
The Last Leaf	V	167
The One-Hoss-Shay	II	236
HOOD		
Autumn	IV	148
Fair Ines	III	168
False Poets and True	IV	230
Flowers	III	53
"I Remember, I Remember"	III	269
"It was not in the Winter"	III	167
Love, Dearest Lady, Such as I would Speak	IV	231
Ruth	V	157
The Bridge of Sighs	VI	124
The Death Bed	VI	131
The Dream of Eugene Aram	II	265
The Song of the Shirt	III	292
HOUGHTON		
The Men of Old	V	133
HUNT		
Abou Ben Adhem	II	121
Jenny Kissed Me	III	158
INGELOW		
The High-Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire	I	289
JONES		
What Constitutes a State?	IV	88
JONSON		
A Pindaric Ode	IV	37
Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke . .	VI	46

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Fame	IV	271
Her Triumph	III	89
How Near to Good is What is Fair	IV	271
Hymn to Diana	III	14
On Elizabeth L. H.	VI	47
Simplex Munditiis	III	91
To Celia	III	90
KEATS		
"Bright Star! Would I were Steadfast as Thou Art"	IV	227
Fancy	IV	143
"In a Drear-nighted December"	III	268
La Belle Dame Sans Merci	I	85
Ode	IV	135
Ode on a Grecian Urn	IV	137
Ode to a Nightingale	IV	132
Ode to Psyche	IV	139
On First Looking into Chapman's Homer .	IV	223
On Seeing the Elgin Marbles	IV	225
On the Grasshopper and the Cricket . . .	IV	224
On the Sea	IV	225
Robin Hood	V	146
Sonnets	IV	223
The Eve of St. Agnes	II	68
To Autumn	IV	142
"When I have Fears That I May Cease to be"	IV	226
KEBLE		
Evening	VI	175
Morning	VI	173
KEY		
The Star-Spangled Banner	III	213
KINGSLEY		
Lorraine	II	306
"Oh! That We Two Were Maying" . . .	III	175
The Last Buccaneer	V	240
The Sands of Dee	I	287
The Three Fishers	I	288

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
LAMB		
Hester	VI	75
The Old Familiar Faces	VI	73
LANDOR		
Absence	IV	276
"Death Stands Above Me"	IV	277
Hearts-Ease	IV	275
"I Wonder Not That Youth Remains"	IV	277
Mother, I Cannot Mind My Wheel	III	273
On His Seventy-fifth Birthday	IV	278
"Proud Word You Never Spoke"	IV	276
Rose Aylmer	VI	119
Separation	IV	277
The Maid's Lament	VI	119
To Robert Browning	V	151
To the Sister of Elia	VI	76
To Wordsworth	V	148
LANIER		
A Ballad of Trees and Their Master	III	316
Sunrise	V	25
The Marshes of Glynn	V	55
The Stirrup-Cup	IV	283
LARCOM		
A Strip of Blue	V	42
LINDSAY		
Auld Robin Gray	I	30
LODGE		
Rosalind's Description	III	84
Rosalind's Madrigal	III	83
LOGAN		
Thy Braes were Bonny	I	275
To the Cuckoo	III	37
LONGFELLOW		
A Ballad of the French Fleet	I	228
A Psalm of Life	V	247
Charles Sumner	VI	111
Dante	IV	239
Daybreak	III	49
Divina Commedia	IV	240

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Hyma to the Night	III	46
My Lost Youth	III	263
Nature	IV	244
Rain in Summer	V	96
Resignation	VI	131
Seaweed	V	88
Sir Humphrey Gilbert	I	186
Sonnets	IV	239
The Arrow and the Song	III	283
The Beleaguered City	V	249
The Bridge	III	279
The Building of the Ship	II	89
The Day is Done	III	240
The Light of Stars	III	48
The Skeleton in Armor	I	124
The Village Blacksmith	V	165
The Wreck of the Hesperus	I	182
LOVELACE		
The Grasshopper	III	30
To Althea from Prison	III	130
To Lucasta, Going Beyond the Seas	III	129
To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars	III	198
LOWELL		
Rhœcus	II	127
She Came and Went	VI	134
Sonnets	IV	251
The Courtin'	II	230
The First Snow-Fall	VI	135
The Sower	V	144
The Vision of Sir Launfal	II	107
To the Dandelion	V	116
To the Future	IV	164
To the Past	IV	161
What Rabbi Jehosha Said	V	282
LOWELL, ROBERT		
The Relief of Lucknow	II	184
LYLY		
Cupid and Campaspe	III	86
Spring's Welcome	III	15

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
LYTE		
Abide with Me.	VI	180
LYTLE		
Antony to Cleopatra	V	238
LYTTON		
Aux Italiens	II	224
The Last Wish	IV	283
MACAULAY		
Ivry	I	220
McMASTER		
Carmen Bellicosum	I	230
MAHONY		
The Bells of Shandon	III	238
MANGAN		
My Dark Rosaleen	III	210
MARLOWE		
The Passionate Shepherd to His Love	III	97
MARSTON		
How My Song of Her Began	IV	266
MARVELL		
An Horatian Ode	IV	54
Bermudas	VI	162
The Garden	V	20
MESSINGER		
A Winter Wish	III	259
MICKLE		
The Sailor's Wife	I	34
MILNES		
The Brook-Side	III	177
MILTON		
An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, W. Shakespeare	VI	44
At a Solemn Music	IV	53
Echo	III	25
Il Penseroso	V	14
L'Allegro	V	9
Lycidas	VI	52

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity	IV	42
On His Being Arrived at the Age of Twenty- Three	IV	198
On His Blindness	IV	202
On His Deceased Wife	IV	205
On the Late Massacre in Piedmont	IV	203
On Time	IV	52
Sabrina	III	26
Sonnets	IV	198
The Spirit's Epilogue	III	27
To Cyriack Skinner	IV	201
To Cyriack Skinner, Upon His Blindness	IV	204
To the Lord General Cromwell	IV	201
To the Nightingale	IV	199
When the Assault was Intended to the City	IV	200
MONTGOMERIE		
The Night is Near Gone	III	11
MOORE		
A Canadian Boat Song	III	233
As Slow Our Ship	III	232
At the Mid Hour of Night	III	304
"Believe Me, if All Those Endearing Young Charms"	III	157
"Fly to the Desert, Fly with Me"	III	155
"Oft in the Stilly Night"	III	271
"The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls"	III	288
The Lake of the Dismal Swamp	II	83
MORRIS		
February	V	102
March	V	103
May	V	104
October	V	105
Summer Dawn	III	172
The Nymph's Song to Hylas	III	173
The Shameful Death	I	303
The Voice of Toil	III	290
MUNDAY		
Beauty sat Bathing	III	88

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
NAIRNE		
The Laird o' Cockpen	II	251
The Land o' the Leal	III	311
NASH		
Spring	III	15
NEWMAN		
Flowers Without Fruit	VI	184
Sensitiveness	VI	183
The Pillar of the Cloud	III	323
NEWTON		
The Quiet Heart	VI	176
O'HARA		
The Bivouac of the Dead	VI	28
PARSONS		
On a Bust of Dante	V	152
Paradisi Gloria	VI	192
PATMORE		
The Toys	VI	146
To the Unknown Eros	IV	165
PEACOCK		
Three Men of Gotham	III	257
PEELE		
A Farewell to Arms	III	197
PINKNEY		
A Health	III	178
POE		
Annabel Lee	I	56
For Annie	III	305
The Bells	III	234
To Helen	III	176
The Raven	I	311
Ulalume	II	302
POPE		
On a Certain Lady at Court	IV	272
The Dying Christian to His Soul	VI	165
The Universal Prayer	VI	166

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
PROCTER		
A Petition to Time	III	252
Sit Down, Sad Soul	III	303
The Blood Horse	III	74
The Poet's Song to His Wife	III	242
The Sea	III	72
PROCTOR		
A Doubting Heart	III	312
QUARLES		
Love Triumphant	VI	155
Respite Finem	IV	271
RALEIGH		
Her Reply	III	98
The Pilgrimage	III	314
ROGERS		
A Wish	III	224
Ginevra	II	215
ROSSETTI		
My Sister's Sleep	VI	137
The Blessed Damozel	I	58
The House of Life	IV	257
The Sonnet	IV	176
ROSSETTI, C. G.		
One Certainty	IV	265
Up-Hill	III	322
SCOTT		
A Weary Lot is Thine	I	40
Bonny Dundee	I	209
Brignall Banks	I	41
Coronach	VI	33
County Guy	III	154
"Hail to the Chief Who in Triumph Advances!"	III	203
"Harp of the North, Farewell!"	III	286
Hunting Song	III	230
Lochinvar	I	36
Pibroch of Donald Dhu	III	281
Proud Maisie	I	284

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Soldier, Rest! Thy Warfare O'er	III	277
The Maid of Neidpath	I	39
SCOTT, W. B.		
Glenkindie	I	48
SEDLEY		
To Chloris	III	138
SHAIRP		
A Life Hid with Christ	VI	186
Constancy	VI	187
SHAKESPEARE		
A Sea Dirge	VI	38
Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind	III	256
"Come Away, Come Away, Death" . . .	III	96
Crabbed Age and Youth	III	94
"Fear no More the Heat o' the Sun" . .	VI	37
Hark, Hark! the Lark!	III	97
Love	III	93
"O Mistress Mine, Where are You Roam- ing?"	III	92
"On a Day, Alack the Day"	III	95
Over Hill, Over Dale	III	19
Silvia	III	91
Sonnets, XII, XVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXIII, LVII, LX, LXIV, LXXI, LXXIII, LXXXVII, XCIV, XCVII, XCVIII, CIV, CVI, CIX, CXVI, CXXIX, CXLVI . . .	IV	184
"Take, O Take Those Lips Away" . . .	III	93
The Fairy Life	III	20
Under the Greenwood Tree	III	21
When Daisies Pied	III	18
When Icicles Hang by the Wall	III	22
SHELLEY		
A Lament	III	266
Arethusa	II	140
Hymn of Pan	III	44
Hymn to Intellectual Beauty	IV	121
I Fear Thy Kisses Gentle Maiden . . .	III	161
Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills .	v	61
Love's Philosophy	III	160

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Ode to the West Wind	IV	129
Ozymandias of Egypt	IV	222
Song	III	225
Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples .	V	73
The Cloud	V	90
The Indian Serenade	III	159
The Sensitive Plant	II	54
"The World's Great Age Begins Anew" .	III	284
To ———	III	161
To ———	III	162
To a Skylark	IV	124
To Night	III	43
"When the Lamp is Shattered"	III	274
SHIRLEY		
Death the Leveller	VI	9
Astrophel and Stella, XXXI, XXXIX .	IV	178
Love's Silence	IV	180
The Bargain	III	87
SILL		
Opportunity	II	106
The Fool's Prayer	II	263
SKELTON		
To Mistress Margaret Hussey	III	108
SOUTHEY		
After Blenheim	I	218
"My Days Among the Dead are Past" .	V	261
The Inchcape Rock	I	179
SOUTHWELL		
A Child of my Choice	VI	149
SPENSER		
Amoretti, LXVIII, LXX	IV	177
Epithalamion	IV	20
Prothalamion	IV	13
STEVENSON		
Foreign Lands	III	248
Requiem	VI	142
The Whaups	III	70
Youth and Love	III	231

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
STILL (?)		
Good Ale	III	258
STODDARD		
Birds	IV	281
" There are Gains for All Our Losses " . . .	III	267
The Sky	IV	281
SUCKLING		
Constancy	III	122
Encouragements to a Lover	III	122
SYLVESTER		
" Were I as Base as is the Lowly Plain " .	IV	183
TANNAHILL		
The Midges Dance Aboon the Burn . . .	III	52
TAYLOR		
Bedouin Love-Song	III	174
The Song of the Camp	II	288
TAYLOR, T.		
Abraham Lincoln	VI	107
TENNYSON		
A Small Sweet Idyl	V	79
" Ask Me No More "	III	180
" Break, Break, Break "	III	320
" Come into the Garden, Maud "	III	182
Crossing the Bar	III	324
Dora	II	11
Early Spring	V	94
England and America in 1782	III	209
Flower in the Crannied Wall	IV	280
In the Valley of Caunteretz	III	321
Locksley Hall	V	223
Mariana	V	162
Merlin and the Gleam	II	122
Morte d'Arthur	II	204
Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington	IV	151
O That 't were Possible	III	185
Poem to <i>In Memoriam</i>	VI	24
Rizpah	I	305
Sir Galahad	V	184

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere . . .	I	51
Song	III	54
Song of the Brook	V	99
Sweet and Low	III	249
Tears, Idle Tears	III	272
The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Bala-clava	I	245
The Charge of the Light Brigade	I	243
The Children's Hospital	II	310
The Deserted House	VI	23
The Gardener's Daughter	II	17
The Lady of Shalott	I	73
The Lotos-Eaters	V	135
The Miller's Daughter	II	31
The Oak	V	41
The Revenge	I	248
"The Splendor Falls on Castle Walls" . .	III	181
The Throstle	III	55
Ulysses	V	175
Wages	III	321
Will	V	259
THACKERAY		
At the Church Gate	III	171
The Age of Wisdom	III	255
The End of the Play	V	283
The Mahogany Tree	III	252
THAXTER		
The Sandpiper	III	70
THOMSON		
Rule Britannia	III	208
THORBURY		
The Three Troopers	I	241
TIMROD		
Magnolia Cemetery	VI	34
TURNER		
Her First-Born	IV	247
Letty's Globe	IV	245
Mary—A Reminiscence	IV	246
Sonnets	IV	245

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
The Harvest Moon	IV	249
The Lattice at Sunrise	IV	248
VAUGHAN		
Friends Departed	VI	10
Peace	VI	160
The Retreat	VI	161
The World	V	245
VERY		
The New World	IV	250
WALLER		
Go, Lovely Rose	III	136
On a Girdle	III	132
WEBSTER		
A Dirge	VI	39
The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi	VI	38
WESLEY		
Refuge	VI	170
WHITE		
Night	IV	221
WHITMAN		
O Captain! My Captain!	VI	105
Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking	V	120
WHITTIER		
Amy Wentworth	I	53
Barbara Frietchie	I	236
Ichabod	V	154
Maud Muller	II	219
My Psalm	VI	189
Telling the Bees	II	308
The Barefoot Boy	V	169
The Eternal Goodness	VI	192
WITHER		
The Author's Resolution	III	110
WOLFE		
The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna	VI	31
WORDSWORTH		
Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, Sep- tember 3, 1802	IV	211

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Daffodils	III	41
"Great Men Have Been Among Us" . . .	IV	208
Hart-Leap Well	I	134
Influence of Natural Objects	V	251
Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge	IV	219
Intimations of Immortality	IV	89
"It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free"	IV	212
"It is Not to be Thought of"	IV	209
Laodamia	II	143
Lines	V	253
London, 1802	IV	207
Lucy	VI	114
Lucy Gray	I	281
"My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold" . .	IV	274
"Nuns Fret Not at Their Convent's Nar- row Room"	IV	175
Ode to Duty	IV	96
On a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm .	V	44
On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic	IV	213
Resolution and Independence	II	48
"Scorn Not the Sonnet"	IV	175
"She was a Phantom of Delight"	V	159
Sonnets	IV	206
Stepping Westward	V	158
"Surprised by Joy—Impatient as the Wind"	IV	217
The Green Linnet	V	106
There was a Boy	V	156
The Small Celandine	V	112
The Solitary Reaper	V	160
"The World is Too Much With Us" . . .	IV	214
Thoughts	VI	65
Thoughts of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland	IV	216
Tintern Abbey	V	47
To Sleep	IV	215
To the Cuckoo	III	38
To the Skylark	III	40
We Are Seven	I	278
"When I Have Borne in Memory" . . .	IV	210
Why Art Thou Silent	IV	218

Author's Index

	VOL.	PAGE
Written in London, September, 1802 . . .	IV	206
Yarrow Unvisited	V	53
WOTTON		
Elizabeth of Bohemia	III	135
The Character of a Happy Life	V	258
Upon the Death of Sir Albert Morton's Wife	VI	47
WYATT		
"And Wilt Thou Leave Me Thus" . . .	III	81
Forget Not Yet	III	82

